DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 053 630 FL 002 509

AUTHOR Weaver, Constance Waltz
TITLE Analyzing Literary Representations of Recent Northern Urban Negro Speech: A Technique, with Application to Three Books.
PUB DATE 70
NOTE 243p.; Doctoral thesis, Michigan State University

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$9.87
DESCRIPTORS *Dialect Studies, *Doctoral Theses, Ethnology, Grammar, Language Research, Language Styles, Literary Styles, *Negro Dialects, *Nonstandard Dialects, Pronunciation, Social Dialects, *Sociolinguistics, Urban Language
IDENTIFIERS *Linguistic Atlas

ABSTRACT

The recent work by sociolinguists is more accurate for consideration of urban dialects than is the analysis provided in the "Linguistic Atlas" materials. The sociolinguists' work shows that the use of nonstandard phonological and grammatical features varies according to one's socioeconomic status, ethnic background, speech context, age, and sex. Using the sociolinguists' data for several phonological and grammatical variables in Negro speech, it is possible to make statistical generalizations concerning particular types of speakers. With such generalizations in mind it is possible, by analyzing the literary representation of the Negro nonstandard dialect appearing in three books, to determine the accuracy of these representations. The books considered here are Shane Stevens' "Go Down Dead" (1966), Warren Miller's "The Cool World" (1959), and Claude Brown's "Manchild in the Promised Land" (1965). Suggestions for further study on determining the accuracy of literary dialect representations, tables on the statistical analysis, and a bibliography are provided. (VM)

ED053630

ANALYZING LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF RECENT NORTHERN URBAN NEGRO SPEECH: A TECHNIQUE, WITH APPLICATION TO THREE BOOKS

By

Constance Waltz Weaver

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1970

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Constance Waltz Weaver
TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

FL002509

Copyright by
CONSTANCE WALTZ WEAVER
1970

ABSTRACT

ANALYZING LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF RECENT NORTHERN URBAN NEGRO SPEECH: A TECHNIQUE, WITH APPLICATION TO THREE BOOKS

By

Constance Waltz Weaver

In 1950 Sumner Ives argued in a still-definitive article that to determine the accuracy of a literary representation of an American dialect, one must refer to the Linguistic Atlas materials if these cover the dialect in question ("A Theory of Literary Dialect," Tulane Studies in English 2:137-82). However, the Atlas researchers examined the speech of only three informants in each urban community. Also, there was an ethnic bias in the Atlas sample: in New York City, for example, there were no Jews, Italians, or Negroes among the informants. Clearly the Atlas researchers did not gather enough data to reflect social variations within major cities, and therefore one can hardly use the Atlas materials to determine the accuracy of literary representations of urban speech, particularly Negro speech.

In the past six years, however, there have been highly competent investigations of urban speech variations. Sociolinguists have compiled data which shows conclusively that the use of nonstandard phonological and grammatical features varies according to one's socioeconomic status, ethnic background (Negro versus white, particularly), speech context (casual situation versus formal), age, and sex.

It is suggested in this thesis that literary critics use not the Linguistic Atlas materials but the recent work of the sociolinguists

to determine the accuracy of literary representations of urban speech, particularly the Negro nonstandard speech found in Northern urban areas. The data of the sociolinguists is then used in determining the accuracy of the dialect representation in three books.

Chapter 1 explains why it is impractical to use Linguistic Atlas materials to determine the accuracy of literary representations of urban speech; it is then suggested that the work of the sociolinguists be used when determining the accuracy of urban dialect representations, particularly representations of recent Northern urban Negro speech.

Chapter 2 presents detailed sociolinguistic data for five phonological and six grammatical variables in Negro speech. This chapter relies primarily on two works: 1) Volume 1 of A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City (Educational Resources Information Center, 1968), which describes an investigation by William Labov and his associates; and 2) A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech, by Walter Wolfram (Center for Applied Linguistics, 1969). The variables discussed are: 1) the use of [iŋ] versus [in] in pronouncing present participles, verbal nouns, and other words ending in unstressed -ing; 2) the use of standard [θ] versus [t], [f], or no consonant at all; 3) the presence or absence of consonantal [r] in various phonological contexts; 4) the presence or absence of final [t] and [d] in monomorphemic consonant clusters; 5) the presence or absence of [t] and [d] representing past tense or past participle; 6) the presence or absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing noun plural; 7) the presence or absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing noun possessive;

8) the presence or absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing verb third singular present tense; 9) the presence or absence of _is_ and _are_; 10) the use of uninflected _be_ where Standard English would require _am_, _is_, or _are_; and 11) the use or non-use of multiple negation. The last section of Chapter 2 provides statistical generalizations which may be useful in determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Northern urban Negro speech.

Chapter 3 uses statistics from Chapter 2 to determine the accuracy of the dialect representation in Shane Stevens' _Go Down Dead_ (1966), Warren Miller's _The Cool World_ (1959), and Claude Brown's _Manchild in the Promised Land_ (1965). It is concluded that all three authors have reflected social distinctions by varying their characters' percentages of nonstandard variants. _Manchild_ is particularly good in showing Claude's decreasing use of nonstandard variants as he moves from adolescence to adulthood and in portraying him as using three different speaking styles during his late teens and early twenties. But despite the general accuracy with which social distinctions are reflected in the characters' differing percentages of nonstandard variants, the percentages themselves often differ markedly from Labov's and Wolfram's statistics. For several variables, the characters in _Cool World_ use nonstandard variants more often than real people of similar social backgrounds; the percentages for the _Go Down Dead_ characters frequently are even higher. In contrast, the characters in _Manchild_ often have lower percentages of nonstandard variants than real people like them.

Chapter 4 suggests further study relevant to determining the accuracy of literary dialect representations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank in particular my thesis advisor, William Heist, not only for his helpful criticism but also for his unfailing patience and understanding. Robert Geist merits special thanks too for his tactful, thorough, and intelligent criticism. Credit goes also to my other two committee members, James Stalker and Julia Falk.

Roger Shuy's assistance in planning this thesis is likewise appreciated. And I am especially grateful to Owen Thomas for his encomiastic criticism of my first draft.

Special thanks goes also to William Labov, for granting me permission to quote extensively from A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City and from The Social Stratification of English in New York City, and to Walter Wolfram and the Center for Applied Linguistics, for allowing me to quote extensively from A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables vi

Introduction: Toward Establishing a Means for Analyzing Literary Representations of Recent Urban Negro Speech. 1

1 Difficulties in Using Linguistic Atlas Materials To Determine the Accuracy of Literary Dialect Representations. 6

2 The Sociolinguists' Data on Five Phonological and Six Grammatical Variables in Negro Speech 12

2.1 Definition of "Non-Standard Negro English" (NNE) and of "Standard English" (SE) 13

2.2 Labov's and Wolfram's Studies as the Sociolinguistic Bases for this Study. 16

2.3 Linguistic Terms and Symbols Used in This Study 19

2.4 Basic Information about Labov's SS Study, Labov's Negro NYC Study, and Wolfram's Negro DET Study. 22

2.4.1 The SS Study. 22

2.4.2 The Negro NYC Study 25

2.4.3 The Negro DET Study 26

2.5 Phonological Variables. 28

2.5.1 The (ing) Variable. 28

2.5.2 The (th) Variable 33

2.5.3 The (r) Variable. 40

2.5.4 The Presence or Absence of Final [t] and [d] in Monomorphemic and Bimorphemic Consonant Clusters. 49

2.6 NNE Versus SE: Same or Different Deep Structure? 60

2.7 Grammatical Variables 66

2.7.1 The (Z_{pl}) Variable 66

2.7.2 The (Z_{pos}) Variable. 71

2.7.3 The (Z_{v}) Variable. 75

2.7.4 Copula Absence 83

2.7.5 Invariant be 99

2.7.6 Multiple Negation. 106

2.8 Some Generalizations about Phonological and Grammatical Variables. 112

2.9 Some Sociolinguistic Generalizations about the Variables Discussed. 114

2.10 The Nature of NNE 115

2.10.1 NNE Compared with SE and with White Nonstandard Speech. . . 115

2.10.2 NNE as the Most Nonstandard Variety of Negro Nonstandard Speech. 118

2.11 Statistical Generalizations 119

3 Analysis of the Literary Representation of Negro Nonstandard Dialect in Three Books 132

3.1 Go Down Dead 134

3.1.1 Plot Synopsis. 134

3.1.2 Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed 134

3.1.3 Styles Analyzed. 137

3.1.4 Validity of the Statistics Presented 138

3.1.5 The Variables Analyzed 139

3.1.6 Overall Appraisal of the Dialect Representation in Go Down Dead 156

3.2 The Cool World 159

3.2.1 Plot Synopsis. 159

3.2.2 Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed 159

3.2.3 Styles Analyzed. 161

3.2.4 The Variables Analyzed 162

3.2.5 Overall Appraisal of the Dialect Representation in The Cool World 178

3.3 Manchild in the Promised Land. 182

3.3.1 Plot Synopsis. 182

3.3.2 Characters and Styles Analyzed 185

3.3.3 The Variables Analyzed 189

3.3.4 Overall Appraisal of the Dialect Representation in Manchild in the Promised Land. 210

3.4 The Representation of Negro Nonstandard Dialect in Go Down Dead, The Cool World, and Manchild in the Promised Land: A Comparison 217

4 Conclusion: Suggestions for Further Study 222

4.1 Statistical Significance 223

4.2 Readers' Reactions to Literary Dialect Representation. 225

Bibliography. 227

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Kahl's Social Class Divisions.	23
2.	Percentage of [in] Forms	29
3.	Percentage of [iŋ] Forms	31
4.	Stylistic Stratification of (th) for Peer Groups, Lames, and Adults	35
5.	Percentage of [f], [t], and ø Realization for (th) Variable: By Social Class.	36
6.	Percentage of [r] for Peer Groups, Lames, and Adults	41
7.	Percentage of [r] Absence: By Social Class.	42
8.	Percentage of [r] Absence: Influence of Linguistic Environment.	43
9.	Percentage of [r] Absence: By Style	45
10.	Percentage of [r] Absence: By Age	46
11.	Percentage of [r] Absence: By Sex	46
12.	Percentage of / t / and / d / Loss for Negro Youths and Negro Working Class Adults	50
13.	Adult Social and Stylistic Stratification of / t / and / d / Loss	52
14.	Consonant Clusters in Which the Final Member of the Cluster May Be Absent.	54
15.	Percentage of Final Cluster Member Absence: By Social Class	54
16.	Percentage of Final Cluster Member Absence: By Age.	56
17.	Loss of Plural / s,z / for Peer Groups, Lames, and Adults.	68
18.	Absence of Possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz]: By Age.	72
19.	Absence of Possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz]: By Sex.	73
20.	Loss of Third Singular / s,z / for Peer Groups, Lames, and Adults	76
21.	Absence of Third Singular [s], [z], and [ɨz]: By Age.	77
22.	Percentage of Standard Verb Agreement for Club Members, Lames, and Inwood Whites	80
23.	Percentage of Full, Contracted, and Deleted Forms of <u>is</u> with Pronoun Subject Versus Other Noun Phrase Subject	86
24.	Percentage of Full, Contracted, and Deleted Forms of <u>is</u> According to Grammatical Category of Complement.	87
25.	Percentage of Copula Contraction and Zero Realization: By Social Class	92
26.	Percentage of Copula Contraction and Zero Realization When Preceded by a Noun Phrase or a Pronoun: By Social Class	93
27.	Percentage of Contraction and Zero Realization of Copula When Preceded by a Pronoun and Followed by Five Kinds of Complements.	94

Table | Page

28. Percentage of Contraction and Zero Realization of Copula When Underlying Form is *is* or *are*: By Social Class 95
29. Percentage of Copula Zero Realization: By Age. 96
30. Percentage of Copula Zero Realization: By Sex. 96
31. Co-occurrence of Invariant *be* and Frequency Adverbs 101
32. Percentage of *be* in SE *am*, *is*, and *are* Contexts 103
33. Total Occurrences of Invariant *be* 104
34. Percentage of Realized Multiple Negation: By Age 109
35. Percentage of Realized Multiple Negation: By Sex 110
36. *Go Down Dead* Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed 135
37. Absence of *r* from *your*, *yourself*, *their*, and the Expletive *there* 141
38. Absence of *-ed* Indicating Past Tense or Past Participle 144
39. Absence of *-s* Indicating Third Singular Present Tense 146
40. Absence of *is* from Third Singular Contexts. 148
41. Use of the Copula in SE *are* Contexts. 149
42. Use of the Copula in SE *am* Contexts 151
43. Invariant *be*. 153
44. Multiple Negation 155
45. Summary of Statistics for *Go Down Dead*. 157
46. *Cool World* Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed 160
47. Final *-ing* as Opposed to Final *-in*. 164
48. *Going to*, *goin to*, *gonna*, and *gone*. 166
49. Absence of *r* from *your*, *your self*, *their*, and the Expletive *there* 167
50. Absence of Final *-t* and *-d* from Monomorphemic Clusters. 168
51. Absence of *-ed* Indicating Past Tense or Past Participle 170
52. Absence of *-s* Indicating Third Singular Present Tense 171
53. Absence of *is* from Third Singular Contexts. 173
54. Use of the Copula in SE *are* Contexts. 174
55. Invariant *be*. 176
56. Multiple Negation 177
57. Summary of Statistics for *The Cool World*. 179
58. *Manchild* Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed 189
59. Final *-ing* as Opposed to Final *-in*. 193
60. *Going to*, *gonna*, and *gon*. 196
61. *With* as Opposed to *wit*. 197
62. Absence of *-t* from *didn't* and *don't* 199
63. Absence of *-s* Indicating Third Singular Present Tense 201
64. Absence of *is* from Third Singular Contexts. 202
65. Absence of *are* from SE *are* Contexts 205
66. Multiple Negation 208
67. Summary of Statistics for *Manchild in the Promised Land* 211
68. Statistics for *Go Down Dead*, *Cool World*, and *Manchild* 219

INTRODUCTION

TOWARD ESTABLISHING A MEANS FOR ANALYZING LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF RECENT URBAN NEGRO SPEECH

Twenty years ago Sumner Ives wrote that "a proper analysis of literary dialects...is practically dependent on such questionnaire studies as the linguistic atlases of France, Italy, and the United States and Canada" (1950:174). At the time, Ives's idea was new; until then, the chief and still definitive analysis of American literary dialects was George Philip Krapp's chapter on the subject in Vol. 1 of his The English Language in America (1925:225-273). Ives rightly argued that the Linguistic Atlas work in the United States made Krapp's work outdated, that if one wanted to determine the accuracy of a literary representation of an American dialect one must not merely depend upon one's own observations of dialect, as Krapp apparently had done, but must refer to the Atlas materials if these cover the dialect in question. Since 1950, Ives's "A Theory of Literary Dialect" has been definitive; his insistence upon the importance of the Atlas work in studying literary dialects has remained unchallenged.

But since 1950, the work of the Atlas researchers has been attacked. The least serious indictment is that the Atlas data is simply irrelevant to our current need to know more about the cultural subgroups within our cities. This irrelevance is suggested by Atlas

editor Hans Kurath's own description (1949:v) of the population studied: "In the Atlas survey, nearly every county in the Eastern States is represented by two speakers, one old-fashioned and unschooled, the other a member of the middle class who has had the benefit of a grade-school or high-school education. In addition, most of the larger cities are represented by one or more cultured persons." Obviously the Atlas researchers could hardly make meaningful statements about language variation within an urban speech community after examining the speech of only three informants. Also there was an ethnic bias: for example as William Labov notes in criticizing the Atlas methodology, there were no Jews, Italians, or Negroes among the New York City informants (1966b:375). Clearly the Atlas researchers did not gather enough data to provide an accurate account of ethnic and other social variations in speech within the cities, and therefore one would be ill-advised to rely on the Atlas materials for determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent urban speech,[1] particularly Negro speech. Yet it seems likely that there will be a decided increase in literary attempts to portray Negro speech, due to the current interest in black culture.

Fortunately in the past six years there have been highly competent investigations of urban speech variations. The pioneering study was William Labov's The Social Stratification of English in New York City (1966b),[2] which has been highly influential because of its

---

[1]"Recent" speech is here defined arbitrarily as speech of approximately the last twenty-five years.

[2]This is essentially Labov's 1964 Columbia University dissertation.

sophisticated methodology and, even more important, because of its concept of the linguistic variable.[3] More recently, Labov and his associates have investigated the speech of Negroes in New York City, particularly the casual speech of Harlem adolescent males who belong to gangs (A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City, 1968). In Detroit, Roger Shuy organized a study reported in Linguistic Correlates of Social Stratification in Detroit Speech (1967), and since then Shuy's associate Walter Wolfram has used some of the data collected for this study as the basis for A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech (1969c). Similar investigations of Negro speech are being conducted in Washington, D. C., and other major cities.

These recent studies are revolutionary, in comparison with the earlier work of the dialectologists, because they focus on language variations within one speech community rather than on variations between entire speech communities and between dialect regions. The sociolinguists have compiled data which shows conclusively that language is influenced by such factors as socioeconomic status, ethnic background (Negro versus white, in particular), speech context

---

[3] A "variable" is a unit which consists of two or more "variants" (or which can be "realized as" two or more variants--the term "realize" will be explained in Chapter 2). For example, an underlying unit which is represented orthographically as -ing in words like running and jumping may be pronounced in more than one way: [iŋ] and [in] are two common pronunciations. (Trager-Smith consonant and vowel symbols will be used throughout this work; the square brackets here and in Chapter 1 enclose broad phonetic transcriptions. This bracketing system will be modified somewhat in Chapter 2.) In other words, [iŋ] and [in] are two major "variants" of a "variable" which is represented orthographically as -ing. Henceforth, parentheses will be used to enclose such variables: the (ing) variable, the (r) variable, and so forth.

(particularly a casual situation versus a formal interview situation), age, and sex, as well as certain other factors. It perhaps seems obvious that the grammatical system of a black member of an adolescent gang in Harlem will differ somewhat from the grammatical system of a middle class white adult, or even a middle class Negro adult. It is also true, though less obvious, that such a youth's grammatical system is likely to differ slightly from that of his parents.

The fact that such language variation can be and indeed has been rigorously described suggests that it is time to bring Ives's theory of literary dialects up to date; the sociolinguists' work makes a major part of Ives's article outdated, just as the Linguistic Atlas work made Krapp's work outdated.

The first chapter of this thesis discusses the feasibility of using Linguistic Atlas materials to determine the accuracy of literary representations of urban speech and suggests that the data compiled by the sociolinguists is potentially more useful for this purpose. Chapter 2 presents in detail much of the sociolinguists' data for several phonological and grammatical variables in Negro speech; the last section of Chapter 2 provides some statistical generalizations which may be useful in determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Norhtern urban Negro speech. Chapter 3 uses the sociolinguists' data for certain variables to determine the accuracy of the representation of Negro nonstandard dialect in Shane Stevens' Go Down Dead (1966), Warren Miller's The Cool World (1959), and Claude Brown's Manchild in the

Promised Land (1965).[4] Chapter 4 suggests further study which would be relevant to determining the accuracy of literary dialect representations.

---

[4]These three books were chosen because in each book the representation of Negro nonstandard dialect is extensive enough to permit at least some investigation of sociolinguistic differences: how the characters' use of nonstandard features varies with socio-economic status, ethnic background, speech context, age, and sex. Furthermore, the Negro nonstandard speech the authors attempted to represent is Northern urban speech (New York City speech) of the past five to twenty-five years. It was important that the speech represented be Northern urban speech, since so far the sociolinguists have completed detailed descriptions of only that Negro speech which is used in certain Northern urban areas. (For linguistic purposes, Washington, D. C. and Los Angeles are apparently considered "Northern" rather than Southern--see Labov 1969a: p. 50 of the ERIC document.) It was also important that the speech represented be relatively recent, because the detailed sociolinguistic studies of Negro speech have all been made since 1965.

CHAPTER 1

DIFFICULTIES IN USING LINGUISTIC ATLAS MATERIALS TO DETERMINE THE ACCURACY OF LITERARY DIALECT REPRESENTATIONS

As noted in the Introduction, Sumner Ives argues in "A Theory of Literary Dialect" (1950) that one should consult Linguistic Atlas materials to determine the accuracy of literary representations of American dialects. There are at least two difficulties with using Atlas materials in determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Negro speech: the Atlas maps are visually misleading and, much more crucially, the Atlas researchers did not gather enough data to provide an accurate account of ethnic and other social variations in speech within any given locality.

The Atlas maps are visually misleading because they indicate actual instances of a given form. In a recent article, Raven McDavid (1967c:36-7) includes Atlas maps showing the distribution of he do (rather than Standard English he does) in Southern England, the Atlantic states, and the Midwest. The map for the Atlantic states, in particular, shows far more uses of he do by whites than by Negroes. But for all one can tell, it may be that 100% of the Negro informants used he do while only 25% of the whites used this form. Of course, one could find out how many Negro informants and white informants there were, count up the instances of he do for both ethnic groups, and figure out the percentages for oneself. Nevertheless, the Atlas maps are visually

misleading (and in this particular article, McDavid makes no attempt to make the ethnic distribution clear).[1]

Unfortunately the misleading nature of the Atlas maps is not the major barrier to using Atlas materials in determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Negro speech. The data gathered by the Atlas researchers is simply inadequate for determining various socially-correlated differences in speech. One can hardly rely on the Atlas materials to describe speech differences between the major socioeconomic classes because the status assignment was so imprecise, so subjective. For example, each investigator for the Middle Atlantic states (including New York City) merely divided his informants into three loosely-defined types: Type I included "older, old-fashioned, poorly educated" informants; Type II included "younger, more modern, better educated" informants; and Type III included "cultured" informants (Bagby Atwood 1953:2). Valid ethnic comparisons of speech differences are even less possible than valid socioeconomic comparisons, particularly for urban areas; as Labov

---

[1]J. L. Dillard (1968) has even more vigorously criticized these maps in McDavid's article. He points out that neither the maps themselves nor McDavid's discussion of them gives any indication of the grammatical constraints which may be relevant in distinguishing white uses of he do from Negro uses. For example, some speakers quite commonly use does in the affirmative (he does) but do in the negative (he don't), whereas it may be that other speakers use do in the affirmative as well as in the negative; in fact this may be a fairly consistent difference between white nonstandard speech and Negro nonstandard speech. While Dillard's point is certainly valid, it is apparent in other Atlas-based materials that the affirmative he do (for he does) and the negative he don't were tabulated separately. Thus the Atlas materials do provide the basis for such comparisons, and the lack of comparisons in McDavid's article is due to McDavid himself rather than to the Atlas maps. Dillard does not make this fact clear.

has noted (Social Stratification:375), for instance, there were no Negroes among the New York City informants.

As a result of these limitations in the sampling procedures, the Linguistic Atlas data is too limited to reveal certain crucial social differences in speech which are now known to exist. For example, recent research in New York, Detroit, Washington, D. C., and elsewhere has shown that many lower class Negroes, particularly adolescents, use the word be in contexts where white speakers would use am, is, or are: I be here every day, he be late all the time, they be fighting often (see, for instance, Negro NYC:231). Apparently the Atlas researchers did not notice such occurrences of be among Negro speakers, though since early in the days of slavery, some American Negroes have used be in this way (see Stewart 1967 and 1968). Speaking of the use of the word be in contexts where Standard English would have an inflected form of BE,[2] Bagby Atwood (1953:27) simply notes that the word be occurred more frequently in How be you (for How are you) than in any of the other four frames where a form of the BE verb was sought. Be is especially common in this context in northeastern New England, says Bagby; and both in New England and in those areas of New York and Pennsylvania where be occurs, this be is very characteristically an older form (presumably a form used by older informants). As is now apparent, the Atlas data on be gives a wildly erroneous picture of its distribution--at least of its current distribution: some

---

[2]"BE" is used in this thesis to refer to the various forms of the verb "to be."

Negroes use the word in contexts where it is apparently never used by whites (Labov Negro NYC:235).

Because the Atlas maps are misleading and, more importantly, because the sampling procedures have made impossible any sound comparisons between urban speakers of various socioeconomic levels and ethnic groups, one must turn to the current work of the sociolinguists to find a solid basis for determining the accuracy of literary representations of urban Negro speech.[3] Not that the methodology of the sociolinguists cannot be legitimately criticized, of course. Joan Baratz, herself a sociolinguist, notes in her response to a paper recently presented by Roger Shuy that sociolinguists have neglected to follow the necessary procedures for analyzing the numerical data they have collected.[4] Though they have freely drawn conclusions about the significance of their numerical data, they have not submitted this data to rigorous tests for statistical significance.

---

[3]Lee Pederson's studies of Chicago speech should be mentioned, as his methodology is somewhere between the methodology of the sociolinguists mentioned here and the methodology of the dialectologists (some of his work has been done in collaboration with Raven McDavid). These Chicago studies (see Pederson 1964a, 1964b, and 1965) have attempted to describe how phonological and morphological features vary with place of birth, race, age, and socioeconomic status. But apparently Pederson and his associates have made no attempt to discover the linguistic environments which might affect the occurrence of the variants of a given variable, and the only style elicited has been interview style. Thus this Chicago methodology seems inferior to the methodology of men like Labov, Shuy, and Wolfram, even though it is an improvement over the Linguistic Atlas methodology.

[4]Report of the Twentieth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, ed. James E. Alatis, 187. Georgetown Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics No. 22. Washington, D. C., Georgetown Univ. Press, 1970.

If one must view with some skepticism the sociolinguists' detailed conclusions about the significance of their statistics, at least their data is always open to reinterpretation, and their general conclusions can certainly be taken as valid. They have found, for instance, that middle class speakers approximate Standard English speech norms more than working class speakers do;[5] that at least in the working classes, whites approximate standard norms more than Negroes (in particular, this is true of white versus Negro youths); that relatively formal speech approximates standard norms more than casual speech; that adults approximate standard norms more than adolescents and preadolescents; and that women approximate standard norms more than men. Sometimes the differences are qualitative: one group (e.g. the upper middle class) never uses a form common in another group (e.g. the working classes). More often, however, the differences are quantitative: one group uses a stigmatized form less often than another group.

In 1925, George Krapp concluded that scientific students of language had discovered no obvious reality to which a writer of dialect was obliged to conform (p. 227). Now, however, there is considerable data available concerning not only the nature of regional dialects but also the nature of social dialects. The rigorous analysis of speech variations among differing socioeconomic classes, ethnic groups, age groups, and so forth may significantly affect the

---

[5]Persons who have not completed high school are often characterized as working class; persons who have finished high school are often characterized as middle class, particularly if they have had some sort of specialized training or have gone to college.

writing of literary dialects and the study of literary representations of recent speech. Hitherto, writers have tended to represent speech differences as absolute: Lee Pederson (1965-66:3) notes, for example, that in the Negro dialect in Huckleberry Finn, the use of d for standard th in these, those, them, and so forth occurs regularly with only one exception, in more than five hundred instances. As Labov says (1969d:60), it is a general characteristic of dialect literature that "Behavior which is variable in actual speech becomes stereotyped in novels and plays, so that forms which occur 30-40% of the time will occur 100% of the time in the writer's treatment." There may be two reasons for this tendency, Labov says: "(a) the author wants to heighten or enrich the local flavor of speech, and (b) the author hears the 'marked' behavior as invariant when in fact it is variable."

Of course if a dialect writer is a sensitive observer of dialect, he will notice these variations and will possibly record them in his characters' speech. Literary critics studying dialect representations may find it interesting to determine whether a given writer presents his nonstandard-speaking characters as invariably using certain nonstandard forms, or whether he presents these characters as sometimes using nonstandard variants and sometimes using standard variants of a given variable. The critic may further want to determine how closely the speech of such characters resembles the speech of real people of similar social backgrounds. At any rate, sociolinguists are now providing the data needed to determine the accuracy of literary representations of urban speech, particularly recent Northern urban Negro speech.

CHAPTER 2

THE SOCIOLINGUISTS' DATA ON FIVE PHONOLOGICAL AND SIX GRAMMATICAL VARIABLES IN NEGRO SPEECH

This chapter covers in detail the sociolinguists' investigations of five phonological and six grammatical variables in Negro speech. The nonstandard variants[1] of the phonological variables discussed are: 1) the use of [in] rather than [iŋ] in pronouncing the -ing endings which form present participles and verbal nouns (running, thinking) and in pronouncing the last syllables of other words ending in unstressed -ing (nothing, something); 2) the use of [t] or [f] instead of unvoiced th in words like nothing and with, or the omission of a consonant where Standard English would have unvoiced th; 3) the absence of consonantal [r] from various phonological contexts (as illustrated in cart, car was, car is, carat); 4) the absence of final [t] and [d] from consonant clusters when the [t] or [d] would not represent past tense or past participle (mis for mist, ban for band); and 5) the absence of [t] or [d] representing past tense or past participle (miss for missed, ban for banned). The fourth and fifth

---

[1] An example of a variable is the past tense morpheme which in Standard English has the regular variants [t] (as in missed), [d] (as in banned), and [ɨd] (as in waited); a nonstandard variant would be the absence of [t], [d], or [ɨd] (miss for missed, ban for banned, wait for waited). Parentheses will be used to indicate most variables: the (ing) variable, the (r) variable, and so forth.

phonological variables are discussed together in section 2.5.4.

The nonstandard variants of the grammatical variables are: 1) the absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing noun plural (cart for carts, car for cars, box for boxes); 2) the absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing noun possessive (cart for cart's, car for car's, box for box's); 3) the absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing verb third singular present tense (hate for hates, love for loves, kiss for kisses); 4) the absence of is and are (he running home for he is running home, they running home for they are running home), and the use of is in contexts where Standard English would require am or are (I is here, you is here); 5) the use of uninflected be in contexts which would require am, is, or are in Standard English (it sometimes be incomplete, they don't be mean); and 6) the use of multiple negation (he don't got none no more).

Before the use of these nonstandard variants can be described in detail, certain terms must be defined and certain other preliminary matters must be discussed.

2.1 DEFINITION OF "NON-STANDARD NEGRO ENGLISH" (NNE) AND OF "STANDARD ENGLISH" (SE)

In the Introduction and in Chapter 1, such phrases as "Negro nonstandard speech" and "Negro dialect" have been used to characterize the speech of Negroes when that speech differs from Standard English ("Standard English" is yet to be defined). One needs, however, a term to describe the most radically nonstandard variety of Negro speech. In Labov's description of the speech of Negro and Puerto Rican speakers in New York City, he uses the term "non-standard

Negro English" (abbreviated NNE) to characterize the most radically nonstandard variety of American Negro English, the casual speech of male adolescent and preadolescent gang members in Negro ghettos.[2] Wolfram in his study of Detroit Negro speech also uses the term NNE to describe the most radically nonstandard speech of Negroes, though he does not specifically say that the Negroes who speak this most nonstandard variety of Negro English are youthful gang members (Wolfram 1969c:1).

More recently, the term "Black English" has been used as a label for the dialect of lower socioeconomic class Negroes. Walter Wolfram and Ralph Fasold use this term now because "the current use of the term 'black' in throwing off pejorative stereotypes of Negro life matches our efforts to overcome the stereotype that this dialect is simply bad English. Finally, the name 'Black English' avoids the negative connotations of terms which include words like 'dialect', 'substandard' and even 'nonstandard'" (Wolfram and Fasold 1969:151, fn. 1).

While admitting the validity of Wolfram and Fasold's arguments for the term "Black English," I have nevertheless decided to use

---

[2] Labov et al. 1968: Vol. 1, p. 4. Labov says his work in New York City and exploratory work in Detroit, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles suggests that in the Northern ghettos, the structure of the language of male Negro adolescent and preadolescent gang members is essentially the same. The few differences found are generally regional differences characteristic of the surrounding white community (Labov 1969a:p. 50 of the ERIC document), or differences due to the differing Southern geographic origins of the Negro populations in the various ghetto areas (Wolfram 1969c:24).

the older and more widespread term "Nonstandard Negro English" or usually just the abbreviation "NNE" to refer to the most nonstandard variety of Negro nonstandard English, to that speech which differs the most from Standard English and from the nonstandard speech of whites. These differences are both quantitative and qualitative; that is, NNE speech involves a higher percentage of certain nonstandard variants than even nonstandard white speech (quantitative differences) and also, NNE speech shows the use of certain grammatical features which are not found in white speech and the lack of certain other grammatical features which are found in white speech (qualitative differences).

In addition to using "Nonstandard Negro English" or NNE to refer to the most nonstandard variety of Negro speech, I will continue to use the phrases "Negro nonstandard speech" and "Negro dialect" as more general terms referring to the speech of Negroes whenever that speech differs from Standard English. Thus Negro nonstandard speech in general may or may not differ from the nonstandard speech of whites of comparable socioeconomic status, age, and sex. For people in Northern urban areas, though, there are frequently at least some quantitative speech differences, Negro speech being slightly more nonstandard.

The term "Standard English" remains to be defined. If "Nonstandard Negro English" (NNE) is used to designate the most nonstandard variety of American Negro English, then logically the term "Standard English" (SE) ought to be used to designate the most standard variety of American English, the most formal speech of such

highly educated persons as lawyers, doctors, and college professors. It should be obvious that the people one might characterize as "NNE speakers" will not always use NNE; in relatively formal situations, their speech will come closer to approximating SE norms. Conversely, "SE speakers" will not always use Standard English; in relatively informal situations, their speech will move away from SE norms.

Certainly other definitions of Standard English are possible, but the one presented here seems best for my purposes: hence "Standard English" or "SE" will be used to designate the most formal speech of highly educated persons. Such persons will be referred to as speakers of Standard English, or Standard English speakers, just as persons who sometimes use Nonstandard Negro English will be referred to as speakers of NNE, or NNE speakers.

2.2 LABOV'S AND WOLFRAM'S STUDIES AS THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC BASES FOR THIS STUDY

Several sociolinguistic studies of urban speech, particularly urban Negro speech, are currently under way; these studies are mentioned in Wolfram 1969b:34-7. Ralph Fasold is studying the social stratification of Negro speech in Washington, D. C., and is attempting to formulate a structural description of various features of "Black English"; Roger Shuy and his colleagues at the Center for Applied Linguistics are investigating the relationship between the speech of Southern whites and Southern Negroes of comparable socioeconomic classes, as revealed in data from Lexington, Mississippi; Bruce Fraser and colleagues at the Language Research Foundation are beginning the study of "Child Black English" in New York City; Stanley Legum,

Clyde Williams, and their associates are presently conducting sociolinguistic investigations of the speech of child peer groups in Watts; the investigators in the East Texas Dialect Project have so far interviewed over two hundred informants representing different races, several socioeconomic levels, and various age groups; and Robert Parslow and his colleagues are conducting in Pittsburgh a study similar to the Detroit Dialect Study conducted by Shuy and his associates (this latter study is described in Shuy et al. 1967). So far, no detailed descriptions of Negro nonstandard speech have emerged from any of these studies.

William Labov's The Social Stratification of English in New York City (1966b) provides some data on the speech of Negroes, but the only detailed descriptions of Negro nonstandard speech which are available to the general public are Labov and his associates' two-volume A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City (1968)[3] and Wolfram's A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech (1969c). Henceforth, the first of these three studies will be referred to as "Social Stratification" or simply as "SS"; the second will be referred to as "Labov Negro NYC" or simply as "Negro NYC" and, unless otherwise indicated, the volume referred to will be Volume 1; and the third work will be referred to as "Wolfram Negro DET" or simply as "Negro DET."

---

[3]Though Labov wrote the two-volume report himself (see the Preface to Vol. 1), his associates Paul Cohen, Clarence Robins, and John Lewis did much of the work which forms the basis of this report. For convenience, however, I will refer to this study of Negro and Puerto Rican speakers in New York City as if Labov were the sole investigator as well as the sole author of the two-volume final report.

This chapter will present in detail much of Labov's and Wolfram's data for five phonological and six grammatical variables. I have arbitrarily chosen to discuss only those variables investigated in at least two of the three studies just mentioned: Labov's SS study, Labov's Negro NYC study, and Wolfram's Negro DET study. For those who want information on other features of Negro nonstandard speech, I highly recommend Ralph Fasold and Walter Wolfram's "Some Linguistic Features of Negro Dialect," in Teaching Standard English in the Inner City, ed. Ralph W. Fasold and Roger W. Shuy, 41-86 (Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970).

There may seem to be little reason for discussing Wolfram's Negro DET data in detail, since Wolfram's data is less useful than Labov's in determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Negro speech. Unlike Labov, Wolfram did not elicit a casual speaking style, the style most often represented in literary works; also, unlike Labov, Wolfram did not explicitly study the speech of preadolescent and adolescent Negro gang members, whose speech seems to be portrayed with some frequency in recent fiction (in Go Down Dead and The Cool World, for instance). But even though Wolfram's data is less useful than Labov's in determining the accuracy of literary dialect representations, it seems important to present Wolfram's data in detail. In the first place, only a detailed comparison of the various sociolinguistic studies will show whether it is in fact true, as Labov suggests, that the structure of NNE described in the Negro NYC study is essentially the same as the structure of the language of adolescent and preadolescent Negro youths in other

Northern ghetto areas (Labov 1969a:p. 50 of the ERIC document). Thus my comparison of Labov's data with Wolfram's data may possibly be a significant step toward understanding the structural similarities and differences in the language of Negro youths from various Northern ghettos.

More importantly, a detailed discussion of Wolfram's conclusions is relevant to my immediate purpose, that of establishing criteria for determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Negro speech. It seems important to present both Labov's and Wolfram's data so that readers can compare these men's statistics and can judge for themselves the validity of the highly simplified statistical generalizations which are presented at the end of this chapter. Readers who are not greatly interested in comparing Labov's data with Wolfram's are advised to omit sections 2.5 and 2.7.

2.3 LINGUISTIC TERMS AND SYMBOLS USED IN THIS STUDY

Labov and his associates have used the theoretical framework of transformational-generative grammar in their sociolinguistic studies. On the other hand, Shuy and his associates Wolfram and Riley, and Wolfram in his Negro DET study, have used a stratificational framework. (For an explanation of basic stratificational terminology, see for example Sydney M. Lamb's 1964 article "On Alternation, Transformation, Realization, and Stratification," in Report of the 15th Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, Georgetown Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics No. 17, Washington, D. C., Georgetown University Press, 1964.) One theoretical distinction which

is important to the present study can be illustrated by the differing explanations of such sentences as he going now, he crazy, he a nut. Labov explains that such sentences contain an underlying / iz / which is contracted to / z /; then the / z / is deleted to give he going and so forth (Negro NYC:205-6). Wolfram also is convinced that there is an underlying copula, but he does not describe a process whereby standard / iz / is contracted to standard / z /, which is then deleted; rather, he implies that the copula is "realized" as either [iz] or [z] or ø (Negro DET:175). In other words, for the stratificationalist, the nonstandard variant, the total absence of the copula, has a status equal to that of the standard variants. By deriving the nonstandard variant from the standard variants, Labov seems to imply that the standard variants are more basic--and from this, the linguistically naive might conclude that the standard variants are more "normal," are "better" not only socially but morally.

In my initial presentation of Labov's and Wolfram's data, I will use each man's own terminology. When speaking in my own voice, I will usually use stratificational terminology. Although I find Labov's transformational explanation of copula deletion, in particular, to be quite convincing, there are two important reasons for using stratificational terminology here. On philosophical grounds, I prefer the stratificational terms because they are less likely to encourage the linguistically naive to assume that some variants of a form are morally superior to other variants. Second, the stratificationalists have terminology which is appropriate for discussing literary representations of Negro dialect. One could not accurately use the

transformationalists' terms "deletion" and "loss" to refer to the omission of a letter from the standard spelling of a word, but the stratificationalists have an appropriate term: "absence." For example, the spelling ol for old shows the absence of the letter d.

Along with stratificational terminology, I will use a transcription system which is basically transformational; this system seems clearest and most appropriate for my purposes. The consonant and vowel symbols are those of the Trager-Smith phonemic alphabet. (Though transformational-generative phonologists do not recognize a phonemic level, they at times use the Trager-Smith symbols.) Slant lines are used here to enclose symbols which represent the bundles of distinctive features that would comprise transformationalists' underlying phonological representations; the representations here are similar to the morphophonemic representations of structural phonology. Square brackets are used here to enclose what transformationalists call "phonetic representations." These phonetic representations are similar to what structuralists have sometimes termed "broad phonetic transcriptions." An example should help to make this terminology clear: the distinctive features of the transformationalists' underlying phonological level would here be represented as / heytZ / for the word hates, / ləvZ / for loves, and / kisZ / for kisses. In each case, the third singular present tense morpheme (or the noun plural morpheme; the examples are ambiguous) would be represented by a single symbol, here / Z / , because the form of the suffix is predictable from the nature of the sound which precedes it. The phonetic representations of these three words would be, for Standard English, [heyts], [ləvz], and [kisɨz].

2.4 BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT LABOV'S SS STUDY, LABOV'S NEGRO NYC STUDY, AND WOLFRAM'S NEGRO DET STUDY

2.4.1 The SS Study

In his study of the social stratification of English in New York City (the SS study), Labov analyzed five phonological variables in the speech of 122 adult informants (32 of them Negroes) from the lower East Side of Manhattan, a tenement area (SS:193). Labov also studied the speech of 68 children of these informants, children ranging in age from 8 to 35 (SS:197). These informants were divided into four major socioeconomic groups: lower class, working class, lower middle class, and upper middle class. On p. 217 of the SS Study, Labov gives a description of class characteristics which was originally taken from Joseph Kahl's The American Class Structure;[4] this description is given here as Table 1.

Labov studied four speech styles: casual style, careful style, reading style, and word list style. Since literary characters rarely if ever read word lists aloud, Labov's data for this style is not included here. Literary characters do not often read passages aloud, either, but Labov's data for reading style is given here for comparison with Wolfram's data because some of Wolfram's percentages are for careful style and reading style together.

The following are descriptions of Labov's three major speech styles:

---

[4]The book was published in 1957 by Holt, Rinehart. Labov does not give any page reference, and I am unable to find a similar chart in Kahl's book. Labov's immediate source was a summary of Kahl's class characteristics which was made by John A. Michael of the Mobilization for Youth project in New York City (see Labov's SS study, p. 218 and p. 202).

Table 1. Kahl's Social Class Divisions

Class Title	Educational Characteristics	Occupational Characteristics	Income Characteristics	Percentage of the National Population
Upper Class	College graduate of the right school	First rate professional, manager, official or proprietor of a large business	Don't bother to count it	1
Upper Middle Class	College graduate	Careermen in professions, managerial, official or large business positions	Equally high but they count it	9
Lower Middle Class	High School graduate, frequently with specialized training thereafter	Semi-professionals, petty businessmen, white collar, foremen and craftsmen	Enough to save for children's college education	40
Working Class	Some High School	Operatives: Blue collar workers at the mercy of the labor market	Enough for cars, T.V., etc.	40
Lower Class	Grade School or less.	Laborers: Last to be hired & first to be fired. Frequent job shifts.	Struggle for bare existence.	10

Style A: Casual Style. Casual speech is of course difficult to obtain in a formal interview. The change from formal interview style to casual style was considered to have occurred when the situation seemed to indicate this and when there was also an appropriate change in the respondent's speech tempo and/or in his pitch range and/or in the volume or rate of his breathing. One section of the interview was particularly designed to elicit casual speech, and it often seemed to do so: the respondent was asked to describe childhood rhymes and games and was also asked to describe a situation in which he had thought he was in danger of being killed. Often casual speech also occurred when an interviewee spoke to someone else in his household or when he spoke to the interviewer after the formal interview had ended (SS:98-110).

Style B: Careful Style. In contrast to casual speech, careful speech is the kind of speech which usually occurred when subjects answered questions considered to be part of the interview (SS:92).

Style C: Reading Style. The interviewee was asked to read two standardized passages which contained the chief variables. In one reading, each successive paragraph concentrated on one of the variables. In the other reading, there were a number of words which formed minimal pairs with respect to two variants of a variable. For instance, there were pairs in which one word had an underlying preconsonantal / r / and one did not, pairs such as guard and god, source and sauce (SS:93-4).

2.4.2 The Negro NYC Study

In their study of the nonstandard English of Negro and Puerto Rican speakers in New York City, Labov and his associates concerned themselves primarily with the speech of male Harlem youth (mostly Negro) who belonged to gangs or "peer groups." The investigators were especially interested in the speech of such youth because it deviates from Standard English more radically than does the speech of Negroes in other age and socioeconomic groups; in fact, the speech of these peer group members is somewhat farther from SE norms than is the speech of Negro youth living in the same area but not belonging to peer groups. One preadolescent group was studied in detail: the Thunderbirds (ages 9 to 13). Some data was also obtained from another preadolescent group, the Aces. The major adolescent groups studied were the Cobras and the Jets, most of whom were in their lower-to-middle teens. There were also the Oscar Brothers, boys 16 to 18 years old who together comprised an informal group but were not organized into a gang.

In addition to these peer group members, there were the "lames": isolated individuals who lived in areas dominated by peer groups but who did not belong to a group. For comparison with these peer group members and lames, almost all of whom were Negro rather than Puerto Rican, Labov and his associates interviewed some working class white peer groups in the Inwood section of Manhattan, where whites and Negroes have little contact except in school. One preadolescent group and one adolescent group were studied. Finally, in addition to these youth, about 100 adults from Central Harlem were interviewed, some raised in

the North and some raised in the South (Negro NYC:31-46). Labov explains that in this study, the large working class adult group was divided into two sections. The upper section paralleled the lower middle class and the upper section of the working class in the SS study (Negro NYC:98). The Negro NYC lower working class section apparently paralleled the lower section of the working class plus the lower class in the SS study.

Determined to record the genuinely casual speech of the peer group members, Labov and his associates arranged group sessions in which the influence of the investigators was at a minimum. These carefully-planned sessions often resulted in excited verbal interaction among the group members. Labov terms this "group" speech Style A; it is similar to but probably somewhat less formal than the casual speech Labov termed Style A in his SS study. In addition to recording this group speech, the interviewers talked individually with several peer group members. The interview style generally obtained was termed Style B, as in the SS study. Style C, reading style, was also obtained when possible.

2.4.3 The Negro DET Study

Wolfram's study of Detroit Negro speech was based on preliminary work by Roger Shuy, Wolfram himself, and William K. Riley (see their Linguistic Correlates of Social Stratification in Detroit Speech, 1967, for a detailed discussion of the population they originally studied and their methodology). Four socioeconomic classes were established: upper middle, lower middle, upper working, and lower working. Educationally, the upper middle class was characterized by college

and usually some graduate training, the lower middle class by several years of college, the upper working class by some high school, possibly completed, and the lower working class by junior high school or less (Negro DET:32, 35, 38-9). Educationally, at least, Wolfram's two working class groups seem to parallel the working class groups in the Negro NYC study.

Wolfram studied four phonological and four grammatical variables in the speech of 48 Negro informants evenly distributed as to the four socioeconomic groups. In each of these groups there were four informants from each of three age groups, 10 to 12, 14 to 17, and 30 to 55. Both sexes were equally represented. For contrast with the upper middle class Negro informants, there were 12 upper middle class white informants, divided equally according to age and sex (Negro DET:14). The informants had to have been residents of Detroit for at least ten years; children and teenagers had to be native Detroiters, and preferably adults were to have lived in Detroit half their life (p. 15). Wolfram notes that though it would have been preferable to have had as informants only those adults who were lifetime residents of Detroit, the random population sample did not produce enough lifetime residents. Among the adult Negro population, in-migration is clearly the rule rather than the exception (pp. 18-19). The 1960 U. S. Census showed that close to 50% of Detroit Negro residents had been born in Southern states (p. 23). Over 50% of the parents of Wolfram's 48 Negro informants were born in one of the South Central states, usually Alabama or Georgia or Mississippi (p. 24). Wolfram explains that this particular origin of Detroit

Negroes contrasts with the in-migration pattern of Eastern cities such as Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, D. C., which draw a majority of their Negro population from the South Atlantic coastal region, including South Carolina, North Carolina, and the coast of Georgia. Wolfram notes William Stewart has suggested to him that some differences in the NNE of Negroes in various Northern cities can be traced to different Southern origins (p. 24).

Only two speech styles were elicited in this study (Negro DET:3): careful or interview style (Labov's Style B) and reading style (Style C). The reading passages used in Labov's SS study were also used by the Detroit investigators in the expectation that careful comparative analysis would be made of reading style and phonology in New York City and Detroit (Shuy et al. 1967:Part II, 25).

2.5 PHONOLOGICAL VARIABLES

2.5.1 The (ing) Variable

As previously mentioned, the -ing suffix used to form present participles and verbal nouns like going and standing may be pronounced as [iŋ] or as [in]. (Actually, the vowel sound may be different, or the entire suffix may be pronounced as a syllabic nasal. The present discussion is concerned only with the fact that the nasal may be velar or alveolar, but for convenience the variants will be represented as [iŋ] and [in] rather than [ŋ] and [n].) The [in] variant is stigmatized by many educated American speakers as "uneducated" or "incorrect," even though they themselves probably use this [in] variant about 10% of the time in their casual speech (SS:398).

In his SS study, Labov obtained data on the ethnic stratification of the (ing) variable. For Negroes, this stratification was noticeably affected by geographic origin, as indicated in Table 2 (SS:397).

Table 2. Percentage of [in] Forms

	Style B	Style C
All adult white NYC[5]	31	13
All adult white out-of-town	37	08
All Negro NYC	62	18
All Negro out-of-town	77	42

Out of the total number of -ing occurrences, the Negro informants used the [in] variant approximately twice as often as the adult white informants did in Style B, careful style.[6] In Style C, reading style, the ethnic difference is slight for the NYC informants but very great for the out-of-town informants--8% [in] for the whites, 42% for the Negroes. The Negro out-of-towners' relatively high percentage of [in] in reading style is most likely due to a Southern influence.

---

[5]"NYC" informants were those who had been born in New York City or who had moved there before the age of 8; "out-of-town" informants were those who had moved to New York City after their eighth birthday (SS:188).

[6]It seems to me that it may not be entirely reasonable to compare "all" Negro informants with adult white informants. Labov says (SS:397) that white informants under age 20 used [in] only 1% more than older informants; from this, Labov concludes that there is no serious difference between young and adult speakers with respect to (ing). But the Negro NYC study showed a great difference in the use of [in] between young and adult Negroes, particularly working class Negroes (Negro NYC:122).

In addition to the ethnic and geographic differences, Table 2 shows obvious stylistic differences for all four groups. Even the Negro out-of-towners, with their relatively high use of [in] in Style C, show a sharp difference: 77% [in] for Style B, 42% for Style C.

In his study of the social stratification of English in New York City, Labov found little difference between young speakers and adults in their relative use of [iŋ] and [in]. Nor was [in] predominantly a male usage, though lower class males did use the [in] variant slightly more often than females did (SS:397). But in the Detroit Dialect Study, males used the [in] variant 62% of the time while females used [in] only 28.9% of the time (Shuy 1969:7).

In Systematic Relations of Standard and Non-Standard Rules in the Grammars of Negro Speakers (1967), William Labov and Paul Cohen discuss the results of their interviews of a random sample of 100 Negro adults in three areas of South Central Harlem. Preliminary data derived from analysis of every fourth speaker in the sample afforded the following observations about the socioeconomic stratification of three variables, including the (ing) variable:[7]

1) In careful speech, the middle class speakers are much closer to the prestige norm than working class speakers;

2) Both working class and middle class speakers shift away from the prestige norm when they move from careful to casual speech;

---

[7] In this Systematic Relations paper and in Negro NYC, the -ing discussed is not merely suffixal -ing but unstressed -ing; the (ing) variable is tabulated for the -ing in words like something and nothing as well as for the -ing suffix.

3) The shift of the middle class speakers is more extreme: in casual speech they approach or surpass the working class in distance from the standard.[8]

The most interesting conclusion here is the last one, that in casual speech the middle class speakers were at least as far from standard usage as the working class. Obviously, then, li[illegible]rary dialect representation is highly unrealistic if it uses -in or -in' to represent (ing) in the casual speech of working class Negroes but always uses -ing for the casual speech of the middle class.

On page 122 of Negro NYC, Labov presents the data given in Table 3. This table indicates what percentage of the time the [iŋ] variant occurred as the phonetic representation of underlying / iŋ /.

Table 3. Percentage of [iŋ] Forms

Styles:	A	B	C
Thunderbirds	00	0 [sic]	94
Aces	00	00	100
Cobras		01	67
Jets	03	08	100
Lames		23	100
Middle class adults		67	
Working class adults			
Upper--Northern		65	
Upper--Southern		10	
Lower--Northern		23	
Lower--Southern		15	
Inwood groups		02	

Obviously there was considerable sociolinguistic stratification in Style B, careful speech: the Negro peer groups and the white Inwood

---

[8]Quoted from Labov and Cohen 1967:2-3.

groups almost never used [iŋ], but the lames used it 23% of the time; most adult groups used [iŋ] less than 20% of the time, except the upper working class adults of Northern origin and the middle class adults, who used [iŋ] 65% of the time or more.

The most striking fact about this data is the style shifting, particularly among the Negro peer groups and the Inwood groups. They used [in] all or almost all the time in Styles A and B but used [iŋ] almost all the time in Style C, reading style. Labov concludes (Negro NYC:121) with respect to the (ing) variable that

> NNE differs from SE primarily in the wider range of style shifting. This probably can be attributed to the fact that uniform -<u>in</u> pronunciation is more regular in the South, which determines the form of the NNE vernacular; but since formal speech is associated with Northern patterns, speakers move as far away from this Southern pattern as possible in reading....

Wolfram's study did not include the (ing) variable.

<u>Sociolinguistic conclusions about the (ing) variable</u>

<u>Socioeconomic status</u>. In the Negro NYC study, the middle class speakers were much closer to the prestige norm than the working class speakers, in careful speech. But in casual speech, the SS study middle class speakers used [in] even more often than the working class speakers.

<u>Ethnic background</u>. The SS study Negroes seemed to use [in] about twice as often as the white adults, in careful speech (however, see footnote 6, page 35). But like the Negro peer group members, the white nonstandard-speaking youth of the Negro NYC study used almost all [in] in careful speech.

Style. For all the youth, there was a decided difference between Style B and Style C. This difference was less for the lames than for the Negro peer groups and the white Inwood groups, who used [in] almost all the time in Styles A and B but used [iŋ] almost all the time in reading style.

Age. In Style B, there was a decided difference between the use of [in] by the Negro peer groups and the Inwood groups, and the use of [in] by the adults: the youth almost always used [in], whereas the adults used it 23% to 80% of the time.

Sex. Among the working classes of the SS study, there was some tendency for men to use [in] more often than women. This sex difference with respect to the (ing) variable was more marked among the informants in the Detroit Dialect Study than among the informants in Labov's SS study.

2.5.2 The (th) Variable

A second phonological variable is the pronunciation of the th in words like thing, nothing, and breath. The prestige form is the unvoiced th, the interdental fricative [θ]. Nonstandard variants include an affricate, [tθ], and a stop, [t]. Labov in his SS study was concerned with the (th) variable in initial, medial, and final position. In the Negro NYC study, (th) was examined in initial position only. A (th) score of 0 would mean that the person or group used all fricatives; a (th) score of 200 would mean the person used all stops; and an intermediate score of 100 would mean the person

used all affricates or that the number of fricatives and stops balanced each other out.[9]

The only SS study data which can be used to compare whites and Negroes with respect to the (th) variable is Labov's data on the out-of-town speakers, those who moved to New York City after their eighth birthday. The white lower class and working class speakers had an average (th) score of about 90 for Styles A and B, and a score of about 75 for Style C; the scores for the lower middle class whites were all below 30, and the scores for the upper middle class whites were all 0 (SS:644).

For Negro out-of-town speakers in the SS study, there was no significant class stratification and there were no great stylistic differences either. The highest scores were for Style B. The highest score (which occurred for the lower class in Style B) was under 20, and Labov says that mostly what is responsible for the level of the index being above zero is the use of [f] where Standard English would have [θ] (SS:645,644).

---

[9]Labov also made a similar study of what he terms the (dh) variable: the pronunciation of the th in words like then, either, and breathe. I am not discussing the (dh) variable at length because unfortunately the data from Labov's SS study and from his Negro NYC study is not expressed in percentages; that is, Labov does not say what percentage of the time the affricate [dð] or the stop [d] was used instead of standard voiced th, [ð]. However, some non-statistical conclusions are apparent from Labov's Negro NYC study, in which he examined the (dh) variable in initial position only. For both group style and careful style, the Negro peer groups used the [d] pronunciation relatively frequently. In casual speech, the white Inwood youths used [d] even more often than the Negro peer groups. Working class Negro adults from the North used [d] somewhat less often than the Negro youths; working class Negro adults who had come to the North from the South used [d] decidedly less often than the youths; and middle class Negro adults used [d] for voiced th only infrequently, if at all (Negro NYC:94).

Labov's (th) scores from Negro NYC (p. 94) are given here in Table 4.

Table 4. Stylistic Stratification of (th) for Peer Groups, Lames, and Adults

Styles:	A	B
Thunderbirds	56	86
Aces		113
Cobras	71	67
Jets	79	58
Lames		90
Middle class adults		(22) [sic]
Working class adults		
Upper--Northern	46	33
Upper--Southern	13	14
Lower--Northern	25	10
Lower--Southern	14	32
Inwood groups	66	81

The adolescent Cobras and Jets had higher (th) scores than the preadolescent Thunderbirds in Style A, but the adolescents' scores were lower than the preadolescents' for Style B. The adolescents were obviously more aware of the prestige norm than the preadolescents. (It is not clear why the Thunderbirds' index for Style A was lower than their index for Style B.) The lames' (th) scores were similar to the preadolescents'. The white Inwood groups fell somewhere between the preadolescent and adolescent Negro peer groups for Styles A and B.

The adults--particularly those from the South--had lower (th) scores than the youth. For these Negro adults, the index scores did not seem to show a regular downward shifting as the context

became more formal. Labov concludes that (th) is not an important sociolinguistic variable for adult Negro speakers (Negro NYC:98).

Instead of examining initial (th) as Labov did in the Negro NYC study, Wolfram tabulated the variants of (th) in morpheme medial and final positions, as in ether and breath, respectively. He categorized the variants as θ, f, t, and ø, though θ and t have more than one phonetic realization. (For consistency I will henceforth treat such variants as if they were phonetic representations and will enclose them in square brackets.) Wolfram says these variants are mainly restricted to medial and final positions; initially (th) usually is represented by [θ] among even working class Negro speakers (Negro DET:83).

Wolfram presents both a table and a graph giving the percentage of [f], [t], and ø realizations of / θ / (Negro DET:84). Most of the data in the table is presented here as Table 5. "UMW" stands for upper middle class whites; "UMN" and "LMN" represent upper middle class Negroes and lower middle class Negroes, respectively; and "UWN" and "LWN" stand for upper and lower working class Negroes, respectively.

Table 5. Percentage of [f], [t], and ø Realization for (th) Variable: By Social Class

	[f]	[t]	ø	Total
UMW	0.0	2.3	0.0	2.3
UMN	5.5	6.1	.6	12.1
LMN	11.0	5.8	.6	17.4
UWN	37.9	19.5	1.8	59.2
LWN	44.7	20.0	6.6	71.3

From the totals in the right-hand column, it is obvious that the sharpest social stratification was between the

middle classes and the working classes. The upper middle class whites had a categorical absence of the [f] and ø variants, and for them the [t] realization was found only in the lexical item with (Negro DET:84). Also, 14 of the 24 middle class Negro informants had a categorical absence of the [f] variant.

In the three lower classes the [f] variant was used approximately twice as often as the [t] variant, and the ø variant was used only rarely. Wolfram notes (p. 85) that the words with and nothing accounted for the majority of the [t] and ø realizations. Working class Negroes used [t] about 70% of the time in with and about 32% of the time in nothing. Middle class Negroes used [t] about 24% of the time in with and about 9% of the time in nothing. Only lower working class Negroes had more than about 5% consonant absence for either with or nothing; these speakers pronounced with without a final consonant about 6% of the time and nothing without a medial consonant about 26% of the time (Negro DET:86-8).

Wolfram made no comparison of interview style (Labov's Style B) and reading style (Labov's Style C) because (th) occurred so infrequently in the reading passage.

There were, however, age differences. For the Negro upper middle and lower middle classes combined, (th) was realized as [f], [t], or ø 25.5% of the time for preadolescents, 8.6% of the time for teenagers, and 10% of the time for adults; for the middle classes, the greatest age difference was obviously between the preadolescents and the others. But for the upper working and lower working classes, the adults used far fewer [f], [t], and ø variants than the youth:

preadolescents used these variants 74.1% of the time, teenagers 75.1% of the time, and adults only 46% of the time (Negro DET:93).

There was a definite sex difference with respect to the realizations of (th). The combined percentage of [f], [t], and ø realizations was 34.9 for all the females, 44.7 for all the males. The upper working class had the sharpest difference: 47.5% for females, 70.1% for males. The men and women of the lower working class, on the other hand, showed almost no difference in nonstandard realizations of (th) (Negro DET:92).

Sociolinguistic conclusions about the (th) variable

Socioeconomic status. The lower class and the working class out-of-town whites in Labov's SS study showed much higher (th) scores than the other classes, but there was no significant class stratification for the Negro out-of-towners. There did not appear to be much class stratification in the Negro NYC study, either, but in Wolfram's study of Detroit Negroes the working classes used a considerably higher percentage of nonstandard variants than the middle classes.

Ethnic background. The lower class and working class out-of-town whites in Labov's SS study had considerably higher (th) scores than any of the Negro out-of-town groups. But for the youth in the Negro NYC study, there did not seem to be much difference between the (th) scores of the white Inwood groups and the scores of the almost exclusively Negro groups. Wolfram's study compares only upper middle class whites with Negroes. The upper middle class Negroes of his study used nonstandard variants 12.1% of the time, whereas

the upper middle class whites used nonstandard variants 2.3% of the time.

Style. The SS study showed a clear pattern of style stratification for the white out-of-towners, but no clear style stratification for the Negro out-of-towners. Similarly, there was no clear style shift pattern for the Negro adults in the Negro NYC study. Labov concludes that while (th) definitely is a sociolinguistic variable for white adults, it is not an important sociolinguistic variable for Negro adults. The adolescent peer groups did, however, show a drop in (th) scores from Style A to Style B and a sharper drop from Style B to Style C.

Age. In the Negro NYC study, the youth definitely had higher (th) scores than the adults and, in fact, the preadolescents generally had higher scores than the adolescents. Wolfram found that for the middle classes, the sharpest age difference was between the preadolescents, on the one hand, and the adolescents and adults, on the other hand. But for the working classes, the preadolescents and adolescents (who together used nonstandard variants about 75% of the time) both differed sharply from the adults (who used nonstandard variants 46% of the time).

Sex. In Wolfram's study, the males used nonstandard variants 44.7% of the time, whereas the females used nonstandard variants 34.9% of the time.

2.5.3 The (r) Variable

In the SS study, Labov tabulated the presence or absence of final and pre-consonantal [r] in words like car, bare, beer, card, bared, beard. The results most pertinent to the present study are summarized in Negro NYC (pp. 99-100). Labov says that in casual speech, preconsonantal / r / within a word and / r / occurring finally before a word beginning with a consonant are almost always vocalized (made into a vowel sound by loss of constriction) by all white New Yorkers except the upper middle class. However, when the next word begins with a vowel, consonantal [r] is usually used. For white speakers, there is never any vocalization of / r / in intervocalic position within a word, as in carat, merit.

This brief description of the SS results can be compared with the Negro NYC data (p. 102), which is given in Table 6. The first two columns show the percentage of [r] when the underlying / r / occurred intervocalically; the next two columns show the percentage of [r] when the underlying / r / occurred finally before a word beginning with a vowel; and the last three columns show the percentage of [r] when the underlying / r / occurred preconsonantally within a word or finally before a word beginning with a consonant.

When the underlying / r / occurred preconsonantally or finally before a word beginning with a consonant, the Negro peer groups almost always vocalized it in both Style A and Style B. Their greatest style shift was between Style B and Style C. The lames had a higher percentage of consonantal [r] in Style C than any of the Negro peer groups. The white Inwood groups, on the other hand, had no [r]

Table 6. Percentage of [r] for Peer Groups, Lames, and Adults

	(VrV)		(r##V)		(r)		
Styles:	A	B	A	B	A	B	C
Thunderbirds	98	98	15	04	01	00	10
Aces		100		06	00	00	03
Cobras	97	93	00	04	00	02	13
Jets	100	96	11	02	00	00	19
Lames		87		11		02	25
Middle class adults	100	95	52	77	10	25	
Working class adults							
Upper--No.		89	21	40	00	08	
Upper--So.		78	23	40	09	11	
Lower--No.	79	80	22	06	01	05	
Lower--So.		79	37	12	(08)	09	
Inwood groups	100	100	95	80	00	00	00

at all in the three styles discussed here. The adults' use of preconsonantal [r] and final [r] before a consonant was about 10% higher than that of the youth, for Styles A and B (Style C was not elicited from the adults).

When the final underlying / r / occurred before a word beginning with a vowel, the Negro peer groups and lames usually did not have a consonantal [r] in Styles A and B; the range was from 2% [r] to 15%. In this respect the Negro peer groups and lames were in sharp contrast with the white nonstandard-speaking Inwood groups, who used 95% [r] in Style A and 80% in Style B. The middle and upper working class adults characteristically had much higher scores, particularly for Style B, than the Negro peer groups, the lames, and the lower working class adults; of these groups, the middle class adults had the highest

percentage of [r]: 52% for Style A and 77% for Style B. But even the middle class adults used decidedly less [r] than the white Inwood youth, before a word beginning with a vowel.

Obviously all groups had a high percentage of consonantal [r] when the underlying / r / occurred intervocalically within a word. However, even such a relatively infrequent loss of intervocalic / r / as that found among these Negro speakers is not found among white nonstandard speakers in New York City (Negro NYC:100). The white Inwood groups, for example, had 100% intervocalic [r] in both stylistic contexts.

Wolfram studied the realizations of post-vocalic / r / in word-final and preconsonantal position (car, bare; card, bared); also, three examples of potential / r / in word-medial intervocalic position (carat, merit) were tabulated for each informant. Wolfram's mean percentages for the absence of final and preconsonantal [r] (Negro DET:110) are given here in Table 7. Like Labov, Wolfram notes (p. 109) that in most cases in which a constricted [r] is absent, a central vowel is present; in Labov's terminology, the / r / is vocalized.

Table 7. Percentage of [r] Absence: By Social Class

UMW	0.8
UMN	20.8
LMN	38.8
UWN	61.3
LWN	71.7

Obviously there was a great difference between the upper middle class whites and the Negroes as a whole. In contrast to the Negroes, the white standard speakers almost never showed an absence of [r] in

final or preconsonantal position. Detroit, unlike New York City, is clearly an r-pronouncing area.

On p. 114 Wolfram gives the percentages of [r] absence when underlying / r / is followed by a vowel in the same word, when / r / is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, and when / r / is followed by a word beginning with a consonant. This data is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Percentage of [r] Absence: Influence of Linguistic Environment

	__V	__#V	__#C
UMN	2.8	10.8	25.3
LMN	5.6	34.1	40.8
UWN	13.9	57.5	70.2
LWN	16.7	65.7	79.1

The upper middle class whites were excluded from this and subsequent tabulations concerning the (r) variable; Wolfram says their 0.8% [r] absence occurred only in unstressed syllables when underlying / r / was followed by a consonant (Negro DET:110). For the Negro groups, the lower the socioeconomic class, the greater the absence of [r]. The consonantal [r] was most frequently absent when underlying word-final / r / was followed by a word beginning with a consonant. For the upper working class Negroes [r] was absent 70.2% of the time in this environment; for the lower working class Negroes it was absent 79.1% of the time. The most nearly comparable data[10]

[10]The figures are not quite comparable, in two respects. In the Negro NYC study, preconsonantal / r / within a word was tabulated along with final / r / before a word beginning with a consonant. Wolfram's data here does not include preconsonantal / r / within a word. More

from the Negro NYC study (Style B) indicates about 90% absence for upper working class Negro adults and about 93% for lower working class Negro adults. The middle class Negro NYC adults had 75% absence for interview style, compared to 25.3% for the Detroit upper middle class Negroes and 40.8% for the Detroit lower middle class Negroes.

When word-final / r / is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, [r] absence is less than when underlying / r / is followed by a word beginning with a consonant. For the upper working class Negroes in Wolfram's study, [r] absence was 57.5% before a word beginning with a vowel; for the lower working class Negroes it was 65.7%. Again the most nearly comparable Negro NYC percentages of [r] absence were higher: 60% for upper working class adults and about 91% for lower working class adults. The Negro NYC middle class adults had 48% [r] absence in interview style, compared with 10.8% for the Detroit upper middle class Negroes and 34.1% for the lower middle class Negroes. The fact that these Detroit Negroes had less absence of final [r] than the Negro NYC informants of similar socioeconomic background accords with the fact that Detroit is typically an r-pronouncing area whereas New York City is not.

The absence of [r] is least when the underlying / r / is intervocalic within a word. Wolfram's upper working class speakers had a 13.9% [r] absence in this environment, while the lower working class speakers had a 16.7% absence. In this case, the most nearly

---

importantly, Labov's data is for adult speakers only, whereas Wolfram's data includes adolescent and preadolescent speakers.

comparable Negro NYC figures were not much different: about 16% absence for upper working class adults and about 21% for lower working class adults. The figures for the Negro NYC middle class adults were also not much different from the figures for the Detroit middle class speakers. Apparently there is not much difference in the way Negroes in r-pronouncing and r-less areas treat an underlying / r / which is intervocalic within a word; among all groups, absence of intervocalic [r] is relatively slight.

According to Wolfram (Negro DET:116), there is considerable stylistic influence on [r] absence for all social groups. Wolfram's data is given in Table 9.

Table 9. Percentage of [r] Absence: By Style

Styles:	Interview	Reading
UMN	25.0	15.2
LMN	38.1	23.2
WN	66.2	55.5

In each case, the percentage of [r] absence drops noticeably from interview style to reading style.

As far as age differences are concerned, Wolfram found no clear pattern for all socioeconomic groups.[11] For the middle class groups,

---

[11]It is impossible to determine to what extent this lack of a clear pattern is due to the limited size of Wolfram's samples. Each of the percentages in the age stratification tables is based on only 4 speakers. Labov says (SS:181) "we will find that from ten to twenty individuals will give us a value for a social class which fits consistently into an overall pattern of stratification, while groups of four or five show unrelated fluctuation." This suggests that all of Wolfram's age stratification statistics may be suspect. Wolfram himself says (1969b:34), with respect to his Negro DET study, "Wolfram's limited sample (48 informants)...needs further extension, particularly with reference to his conclusions about age, sex, and

[r] absence was greater for preadolescents and adolescents than for adults. But upper working class adults had more [r] absence than upper working class preadolescents, and lower working class adults had more [r] absence than lower working class adolescents. Wolfram's actual figures for the age stratification of the percentage of [r] absence (Negro DET:117) are given in Table 10.

Table 10. Percentage of [r] Absence: By Age

	10-12	14-17	Adult
UMN	11.3	41.3	8.8
LMN	40.0	45.0	33.7
UWN	51.3	71.3	61.3
LWN	80.0	61.3	73.8

Wolfram found a rather definite contrast for the (r) variable between males and females. Table 11 presents Wolfram's data (Negro DET:117).

Table 11. Percentage of [r] Absence: By Sex

	Male	Female
UMN	33.3	10.0
LMN	47.5	30.0
UWN	80.0	55.8
LWN	75.0	68.3

For each socioeconomic group, males had more [r] absence than females. The greatest difference occurred between the males and females of the upper working class.

---

racial isolation." Wolfram further notes (p. 39) that we still do not know what is "the minimal number of informants in each social 'cell' for the linguist to adequately characterize the behavior of that cell."

Sociolinguistic conclusions about the (r) variable

Socioeconomic status. Among the predominantly white groups of the SS study, only the upper middle class did not almost always vocalize / r / preconsonantally within a word or before a word beginning with a consonant. Within the adult Negro groups of the Negro NYC study, the only sizeable class difference was between the middle class and the working classes in the use of consonantal [r] in word final position before a following vowel; the middle class speakers had [r] in this position decidedly more often than the working classes did. In Wolfram's study the class stratification was gradient rather than sharp: that is, no one group was set off from the others by decidedly greater or less use of [r]; rather, the use of [r] decreased fairly steadily with a decrease in social class level.

Ethnic background. In New York City, a so-called r-less area, Labov found that in casual speech both Negroes and whites (except upper middle class whites) usually vocalized preconsonantal / r / and final / r / when the following word began with a consonant. Wolfram's study showed 0.8% absence of preconsonantal and final [r] for upper middle class white speakers, 20.8% for upper middle class Negroes.

When final / r / was followed by a word beginning with a vowel, Labov found that white speakers in New York City vocalized the / r / only infrequently, whereas Negro speakers very frequently vocalized the / r /. When / r / occurred intervocalically within a word, white speakers never vocalized it, whereas Negro speakers did so occasionally.

Wolfram's findings were similar, though there was a definite difference. Negroes in r-pronouncing Detroit vocalized or totally omitted final / r / before a vowel less frequently than Negroes in r-less New York City; in some cases, the differences were striking.

Style. For the Negro youths in the Negro NYC study, there was a clear pattern of style stratification when / r / occurred preconsonantally or followed by a word beginning with a consonant. For the Negro peer groups, the greatest increase in the use of such [r]'s occurred between Style B, careful style, and Style C, reading style. The lames also had a decided increase between Style B and Style C. For middle class and upper working class adults there was a sharp increase between Style A (casual style) and Style B when the underlying / r / was followed by a word beginning with a vowel. Style C data was not elicited for the adults. In Wolfram's study, for each social class the presence of [r] increased noticeably from interview style to reading style. The shift was greater for the middle class Negroes than for the working class Negroes.

Age. In the Negro NYC study, the adults generally had a higher percentage of [r] in both Styles A and B when a final [r] was followed by a word beginning with a vowel. In Wolfram's study the middle class adults used [r] more frequently than either the preadolescents or the adolescents, but the working class groups showed no clear pattern of age stratification.

Sex. For each socioeconomic group, the males of Wolfram's study used [r] less often than the females. The greatest difference was between the males and females of the upper working class.

2.5.4 The Presence or Absence of Final [t] and [d] in Monomorphemic and Bimorphemic Consonant Clusters

Labov and Wolfram both studied the presence or absence of final [t] and [d] in monomorphemic consonant clusters, where the [t] or [d] would not represent past tense or past participle (as in mist and band). At the same time, both men studied the presence or absence of final [t] and [d] in bimorphemic consonant clusters, where the [t] or [d] would represent past tense or past participle (as in missed or banned). As the data shows, certain phonological constraints relevant to the absence of [t] and [d] from monomorphemic clusters are also relevant to the absence of these stops from bimorphemic clusters.

Both Labov and Wolfram were concerned with the presence or absence of past tense and past participle [t]'s and [d]'s only when these occurred or would have occurred as the final member of a consonant cluster; neither man studied the presence or absence of the past tense and past participle suffix [ɨd].[12]

Some of Labov's Negro NYC data (p. 128) is given here in Table 12. The figures show the percentage of / t / and / d / loss from monomorphemic clusters and from bimorphemic clusters.[13]

---

[12]Fasold and Wolfram (1970:59) note that this [ɨd] suffix is rarely absent in Negro dialect.

[13]I would use a single symbol, such as / D /, to express the underlying phonological representation of the past tense and past participle morphemes. For regular verbs, this / D / would, in Standard English, automatically become [t], [d], or [ɨd], depending on the preceding phonological environment. Since Labov and Wolfram were not concerned with the [ɨd] realization, it seems best to use just / t / and / d / for the representation underlying past tense

In both cases, there are figures showing the percentage of loss when the following word began with a consonant and when it began with a vowel.

Table 12. Percentage of / t / and / d / Loss for Negro Youths and Negro Working Class Adults

	Monomorphemic		Bimorphemic	
	__#K	__#V	__#K	__#V
Style A (Group or casual style)				
Thunderbirds	97	36	91	23
Cobras	98	45	100	12
Jets	98	82	60	05
Oscar Brothers	97	54	85	31
Working class adults	89	53	60	22
Style B (Careful style)				
Thunderbirds	94	59	74	24
Aces	98	64	83	43
Cobras	97	76	73	15
Jets	94	49	44	09
Oscar Brothers	97	69	49	17
Working class adults	86	49	47	18

In both styles there was clearly a difference between the treatment of monomorphemic / t / and / d / and the treatment of

---

and past participle [t] and [d]. This seems particularly logical since both Labov and Wolfram consider the presence or absence of past tense and past participle [t]'s and [d]'s to be primarily a phonological phenomenon rather than a grammatical phenomenon.

bimorphemic / t / and / d /: deletion generally occurred more frequently when the cluster was monomorphemic. Also, deletion was generally much greater when the following word began with a consonant than when the following word began with a vowel.

There are two major differences in the treatment of final / t / and / d / between group or casual style and careful style. Surprisingly, almost all of the peer groups deleted / t / and / d / more often in careful style than in group style when the underlying stop occurred in monomorphemic clusters before a word beginning with a vowel. In past tense and past participle clusters, however, all groups, including the adults, deleted / t / and / d / more often in group or casual style than in careful style when the underlying stop occurred before a word beginning with a consonant. There was not much stylistic difference in monomorphemic clusters when the following word began with a consonant, and there was not much stylistic difference with bimorphemic clusters when the following word began with a vowel.

For the white Inwood groups, the rate of deletion was less than for any of the Negro groups, including the adults. The Inwood youths' percentages for group style are (Negro NYC:149): 67% loss from monomorphemic clusters when a consonant followed and 9% when a vowel followed; 14% loss from bimorphemic clusters when a consonant followed and 4% when a vowel followed.

Labov gives detailed data for adult deletion of / t / and / d / on p. 149 of Negro NYC. Most of this information is included here in Table 13.

Table 13. Adult Social and Stylistic Stratification of / t / and / d / Loss

	Monomorphemic		Bimorphemic	
	__#K	__#V	__#K	__#V
Style A				
Middle class adults	79	32	30	00
Working class adults				
Upper--Northern	90	56	84	25
Upper--Southern	93	21	41	18
Lower--Northern	87	45	49	16
Lower--Southern	98	46	61	35
Style B				
Middle class adults	60	28	19	04
Working class adults				
Upper--Northern	90	40	19	09
Upper--Southern	89	40	47	32
Lower--Northern	61	35	33	05
Lower--Southern	93	70	72	32

It is obvious that middle class adults generally deleted / t / and / d / less often than working class adults. Lower working class Northern speakers generally deleted / t / and / d / less often than upper working class Northerners; the reverse, however, was generally true for working class speakers of Southern origin. For all groups there tended to be less deletion in Style B, careful style, than in Style A, casual style.

Labov discusses at some length the various constraints for Negro speakers on the deletion of final alveolar stops. These consonants are least likely to be deleted if they occur singly rather than as the last consonant in a consonant cluster (Negro NYC:134); whether the / t / or / d / occurs singly or is the final member of a

consonant cluster is the most important constraint on the deletion of final alveolar stops. The second most important constraint is the influence of a following vowel; anything which is not a vowel favors deletion. The third most important constraint is a preceding morpheme boundary; deletion occurs more often when the alveolar stop does not represent past tense or past participle than when it does (Negro NYC:136-7).

Labov says earlier studies showed that the grammatical constraint (a monomorphemic cluster versus a bimorphemic cluster) was predominant for white speakers but that the phonological constraint (a following vowel versus a following non-vocalic environment) was predominant for Negro speakers. In the Negro NYC study, the grammatical constraint was found to be equal to that of the following vowel for the Jets, the lames, the lower working class adults raised in the North, and the middle class adults in casual speech. In careful speech, the grammatical constraint was more important than the phonological constraint for the middle class adults (Negro NYC:150).

In his study of Detroit Negro speech, Wolfram was concerned with word-final consonant clusters in general. He summarizes different word-final cluster combinations on p. 50; this list is given here as Table 14. Clusters which are not completely voiced or voiceless were excluded because speakers do not treat them in the same way. All but two of these clusters end in / t / or / d /, so if Wolfram's list includes all the different clusters he tabulated (it is impossible to tell for certain from his text), then comparison between his data and Labov's seems reasonable.

Table 14. Consonant Clusters in Which the Final Member of the Cluster May Be Absent

Cluster		
/ st /	test, post, list	missed, messed, dressed
/ sp /	wasp, clasp, grasp	
/ sk /	desk, risk, mask	
/ št /		finished, latched, cashed
/ zd /		raised, composed, amazed
/ žd /		judged, charged, forged
/ ft /	left, craft, cleft	laughed, stuffed, roughed
/ vd /		loved, lived, moved
/ nd /	mind, find, mound	rained, fanned, canned
/ md /		named, foamed, rammed
/ ld /	cold, wild, old	called, smelled, killed
/ pt /	apt, adept, inept	mapped, stopped, clapped
/ kt /	act, contact, expect	looked, cooked, cracked

Wolfram gives tables for monomorphemic and bimorphemic clusters on pages 62 and 68 respectively. These are included here as Table 15. In each case, the figures show the percentage of final cluster member absence when the following environment is consonantal and when it is non-consonantal (when the cluster is followed by a vowel, a pause, or terminal juncture).

Table 15. Percentage of Final Cluster Member Absence: By Social Class

	Monomorphemic		Bimorphemic	
	Cons.	Non-cons.	Cons.	Non-cons.
UMW	66.4	11.5	36.2	2.8
UMN	78.9	22.6	49.2	6.8
LMN	86.7	43.3	61.7	13.3
UWN	93.5	65.4	72.5	24.3
LWN	97.3	72.1	76.0	33.9

For each social class in both monomorphemic and bimorphemic clusters, the final cluster member was absent considerably more often when the following environment was consonantal than when it was non-

consonantal. When a consonant followed, there was a sharp drop in the percentage of final consonant absence from monomorphemic to bimorphemic clusters. The drop was even sharper when the following environment was non-consonantal. In bimorphemic clusters, the final stop consonant was almost categorically present for upper middle class speakers, both white and Negro, when the following environment was non-consonantal.

For monomorphemic clusters, there was a consistent but relatively slight difference in final cluster member absence between interview style and reading style when the following environment was non-consonantal: for the white and Negro upper middle class groups the reading style figures were about 5% lower than the interview style figures, whereas the reading style figures were about 10% lower for the lower middle class and the working class Negroes. When the following environment was consonantal, the middle class Negro groups had a greater difference than the other groups: the drop from interview style to reading style was about 15% for the upper middle class Negroes, 13% for the lower middle class Negroes. The difference for the upper middle class whites amounted to about 5%, and the difference for the working class Negroes amounted to about 1% (Negro DET:75).

In bimorphemic clusters the working classes had more stylistic difference than the other classes when the following environment was non-consonantal; the stylistic difference was about 6% for the working classes, less for the other groups. When the following environment was consonantal, the upper middle class whites had the greatest drop, a drop from 50.0% absence to 37.2% absence. The lower middle class

Negroes had the next greatest drop--about 8%. For the working classes there was actually a rise of nearly 4% (Negro DET:76).

On p. 79 of Negro DET Wolfram gives data showing age-correlated differences in the percentage of final cluster member absence when the cluster was followed by a non-consonantal environment. This data is given as Table 16.

Table 16. Percentage of Final Cluster Member Absence: By Age

	Monomorphemic			Bimorphemic		
	10-12	14-17	Adult	10-12	14-17	Adult
UMW	7.9	9.5	14.3	5.6	0.0	2.9
UMN	26.5	23.3	17.8	9.5	8.5	2.6
LMN	53.5	43.2	31.9	12.5	11.6	15.2
UWN	61.2	71.4	79.2	33.3	29.0	17.8
LWN	75.0	66.7	74.4	41.9	26.8	32.5

In monomorphemic clusters the Negro middle classes had a pattern of decreasing consonant absence with increasing age: the preadolescents had greater absence than the teenagers and the teenagers had greater absence than the adults. The upper middle class whites and the upper working class Negroes had the reverse pattern, while the lower working class Negroes had no clear pattern at all. For bimorphemic clusters, the relative frequency of final stop absence was generally greater for the preadolescents than for either the adolescents or the adults. For upper middle class Negroes and working class Negroes, adolescents had a higher final stop absence than adults. The upper middle class white adults and the upper middle class Negro adults had a final stop absence of between 2% and 3% for bimorphemic clusters.

In almost all cases, males had a higher percentage of final stop absence than females. Generally the differences amounted to 10% or

less, but there were two notable exceptions: in monomorphemic clusters, lower middle class males had final stop absence 57.6% of the time compared to 30.9% for females, and lower working class males had 79.1% absence compared to 55.6% for females (Negro DET:77).

Sociolinguistic conclusions about the absence of final [t] and [d] from monomorphemic and bimorphemic clusters

Socioeconomic status. In the Negro NYC study, it was found that middle class adults generally showed [t] and [d] absence less often than working class adults. For the lower working class group raised in the North and for the middle class group in casual speech, the effect of the grammatical constraint (monomorphemic cluster versus bimorphemic cluster) was equal to the effect of the phonological constraint (a following vowel versus a following non-vocalic environment). For the middle class group in careful speech, the effect of the grammatical constraint was greater than the effect of the phonological constraint. In Wolfram's study, the higher the social class, the more often the final stop consonant was present. Perhaps the most significant class difference was the fact that, unlike the other socioeconomic groups, both white and Negro upper middle class speakers almost categorically pronounced the final stop consonant in bimorphemic clusters when the following environment was non-consonantal.

Ethnic background. In Negro NYC, the white nonstandard-speaking Inwood groups are compared with the various Negro groups. For these white youth, the rate of [t] and [d] absence was markedly less than for any of the Negro groups, including the adults. Wolfram compared only upper middle class whites with the various Negro groups. These whites showed final stop absence less often than the upper middle

class Negroes. However, this difference did not sharply set the whites off from the Negroes; rather, there was a fairly regular difference (gradient stratification) between the upper middle class whites and the upper middle class Negroes, the upper middle class Negroes and the lower middle class Negroes, and so forth. Perhaps the greatest ethnic difference occurred in bimorphemic clusters when the following environment was consonantal: the white upper middle class speakers showed a greater stylistic shift than any other group.

Style. In Labov's study there were two particularly significant stylistic differences: 1) the Negro peer groups and working class adults as a whole showed [t] and [d] absence from bimorphemic clusters more often in Style A than in Style B when the underlying / t / or / d / occurred before a word beginning with a consonant; 2) for the various adult groups, there generally tended to be more absence in Style A than in Style B. In Wolfram's study, there was a consistent but relatively slight drop from interview style to reading style in the absence of final stop consonants from monomorphemic clusters. The middle class Negro groups had a greater stylistic shift than any of the other classes; this shift (about 15%) occurred when the following environment was consonantal. In bimorphemic clusters the working classes had more stylistic difference than the middle classes when the following environment was non-consonantal, but when the environment was consonantal the upper middle class whites had the sharpest drop in final stop absence from interview style to reading style.

Age. In Labov's study, the Negro peer groups generally showed less stylistic difference than the adults, except in bimorphemic

clusters when a consonant followed. Also, the adults generally showed less absence than the youth for Style A when a consonant followed and less absence for Style B in monomorphemic clusters. In Wolfram's study, the Negro middle classes had for monomorphemic clusters a pattern of decreasing consonant absence with increasing age; the other classes, however, did not show this pattern. For bimorphemic clusters, final stop absence was generally greater for the preadolescents than for the adolescents or adults.

Sex. The males in Wolfram's study had in almost all cases a higher percentage of final stop absence than the females. The differences generally amounted to 10% or less, though the lower middle class and lower working class males had about 25% more stop absence than the females, in monomorphemic clusters.

Linguistic conclusions about the absence of final [t] and [d]

It was consistently found that the absence of [t] and [d] from bimorphemic clusters occurred less frequently than the absence of [t] and [d] from monomorphemic clusters. Apparently the lower frequency of absence from bimorphemic clusters is due to the fact that the final [t] or [d] represents a grammatical category. There is, however, an important similarity in the absence of [t] and [d] from the two kinds of clusters: in both cases, absence is inhibited by a following non-consonantal environment. That is, the same phonological constraints affect final cluster member absence from both monomorphemic and bimorphemic clusters. Because of the regularity of the phonological conditioning in bimorphemic clusters, Labov asserts that the past tense and past participle [t]'s and [d]'s

in NNE speech cannot be erratic borrowings from Standard English; they are a regular part of NNE even though they occur less frequently in NNE speech than in Standard English (Negro NYC:125).

2,6 NNE VERSUS SE: SAME OR DIFFERENT DEEP STRUCTURE?

A major linguistic controversy is brought up by Labov's statement that the past tense and past participle [t]'s and [d]'s in NNE speech are not erratic borrowings from Standard English but are part of the NNE system. In general terms, the issue is whether NNE and SE have the same deep structure, the same underlying grammatical framework.

Until recently, most linguists have assumed that the English of both whites and Negroes in America is essentially the same in underlying structure. In 1924, for instance, George Philip Krapp wrote

> The Negro speaks English of the same kind and, class for class, of the same degree as the English of the most authentic descendants of the first settlers at Jamestown and Plymouth.
>
> The Negroes, indeed, in acquiring English have done their work so thoroughly that they have retained not a trace of any native African speech.

A page later, Krapp concludes "Generalizations are always dangerous, but it is reasonably safe to say that not a single detail of Negro pronunciation or of Negro syntax can be proved to have any other than an English origin."[14] Considering that Krapp's statements were based on relatively little objective comparison of Negro and white speech, their unequivocal nature might seem ludicrous. But one should

---

[14]The quotes are from Krapp's 1924 article "The English of the Negro," pp. 190 and 191. For similar statements, see Krapp's The English Language in America (1925) Vol. 1, pp. 251, 252, and 263.

realize that Krapp was trying, as best he could, to combat the idea that Negroes had childlike minds and imperfectly developed speech organs which made their speech inferior to the speech of whites.[15]

In 1941, in The Myth of the Negro Past, Melville Herskovits challenged the idea that the speech of American Negroes was entirely English in origin. Herskovits quotes extensively from the then unpublished work of Lorenzo Turner, who pointed out that African influence on Negro speech in America was much greater than anyone else had previously assumed. Herskovits wrote (p. 280):

> since the grammar and idiom are the last aspects of a new language to be learned, the Negroes who reached the New World acquired as much of the vocabulary of their masters as they initially needed or was later taught to them, pronounced these words as best they were able, but organized them into their aboriginal speech patterns.

Herskovits also argued (p. 295) that the major part of the American slaves came from certain fairly restricted areas in the coastal belt of West Africa and the Congo and that though vocabulary differences had made the various languages of these peoples mutually unintelligible, the languages nevertheless "had substantial elements of similarity in basic structure." His own field studies convinced Herskovits that West African pidgin dialects and the languages of various Negro groups in the New World all have "in varying degrees of intensity, similar African constructions and idioms, though employing vocabulary that is primarily European" (p. 291).

---

[15] Raven and Virginia McDavid make this point in their 1951 article "The Relationship of the Speech of American Negroes to the Speech of Whites," pp. 4-5.

Apparently Herskovits' challenge to Krapp's ideas on the origin and nature of American Negro speech went almost unnoticed for twenty-five years. Meanwhile in 1949 Lorenzo Turner's Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect was published.[16] In this seminal book, Turner showed that Gullah had several thousand lexical items of African origin; more importantly, he concluded that many structural features are common to Gullah, to creolized languages of South America and the Caribbean, to the pidgin-like trade English of West Africa, and to many African languages (McDavid and McDavid 1951:11).

Dialectologists like Raven McDavid accepted these conclusions of Turner, but still the dialectologists seem never to have accepted the idea that there could be important structural similarities between African languages and the language of U. S. Negroes who do not speak Gullah. Instead, dialectologists argue that the language of some U. S. Negroes differs structurally from the language of whites because these Negroes use older English grammatical and phonological features not retained by white speakers in the U. S. (McDavid and McDavid 1951:13):

> It is also likely that many relic forms from English dialects are better preserved in the speech of some American Negro groups than in American white speech--not merely items of vocabulary but also items of grammar and even of pronunciation, so far as the occurrence of a given phoneme in a given group of words is concerned. After all, the preservation of relic forms is made possible by geographical or cultural isolation. If Africanisms survive, say, in Gullah because of the long inaccessibility of the Southern caste system which limited contacts between white and Negro speakers, so can relic forms from seventeenth-century English.

Certainly it is possible that, due to cultural isolation, relic forms

---

[16]Gullah is a Negro dialect spoken along the South Atlantic Coast; even today it differs far more radically from Standard English than does other Negro nonstandard speech in the U. S.

from seventeenth-century English could survive in present-day Negro speech yet not survive in white speech. But it seems at least as likely that structural patterns common to various African languages could survive today in the speech of many American Negroes--Negroes who do not speak Gullah.

In the past five years, specialists in creole linguistics have in effect returned to the ideas of Herskovits and Turner. They have been arguing that grammatical features common to West African Pidgin English and to many New World creole languages spoken by people of African ancestry, features not basic to English, do nevertheless appear in the speech of some U. S. Negroes.[17] Both creole and NNE speakers, for example, tend to omit <u>is</u> and <u>are</u> from their speech: <u>there nothing we can do</u>, <u>they sleepy</u>. Also they use the word <u>be</u> to express habitual aspect, as in <u>I don't be here Sunday</u> (for Standard English <u>I am not usually here on Sundays</u>)--Beryl Bailey 1968:574. Creole languages also express by means different from those of Indo-European languages such grammatical concepts as past tense in verbs, number distinctions in verbs and nouns, the possessive relationship, and pronoun cases. The possessive, for example, is

---

[17] See for example William Stewart's "Continuity and Change in American Negro Dialects" (1968). His 1967 "Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects" is also relevant. Richard Long (1969) says that certain phonological as well as grammatical features characteristic of Nonstandard Negro English are found in the Niger-Congo languages, which are the languages originally spoken by the Negroes brought to America as slaves. For example, NNE speakers often use stops and affricates (or no consonant at all) in place of Standard English [ð] and [θ]. There well may be a causal relationship between this fact and the fact that the Niger-Congo languages do not have the interdental fricatives [ð] and [θ].

expressed by a juxtaposition of words rather than by an inflectional ending: an example in English would be the printer lead box rather than the printer's lead box (Bailey 1968:573). Like the frequent absence of the present tense BE forms is and are and the use of be to express habitual action, most of these other creole features Bailey mentions are found also in the present-day nonstandard speech of some U. S. Negroes. Such creole linguists as William Stewart and Bailey herself argue that the differences between the grammar of Standard English and the grammar of NNE may be due largely to partial survival in NNE of the grammatical system of the creole language spoken by Negroes generations ago, not many years after Negroes were first brought to America.

In summary, then, there are two basic positions concerning the origin of and current structure of Nonstandard Negro English in the U. S. The dialectologists, who have been mainly occupied with lexical and phonological matters, contend that there are no deep structure differences between white speech and Negro speech and that the nonstandard forms which are now peculiar to Negroes can be explained as older English forms which have survived only in Negro speech, due to the Negroes' cultural isolation. The idea that there are no deep structure differences between NNE and Standard English is reinforced by a tentative hypothesis of transformational linguists, the hypothesis that various dialects of a language differ only in surface structure features, not in deep structure. The creolist position is diametrically opposed to this position of the dialectologists and the transformationalists. Creolists, primarily concerned

with grammatical matters, argue that there <u>are</u> deep structure differences between NNE and Standard English, due to the influence of certain African grammatical features on the pidgin English first spoken by New World slaves.

It seems obvious that the origin and the grammatical structure of the English spoken by Negroes in the U. S. (particularly the grammatical structure of present-day NNE) are matters for empirical investigation. Both the dialectologists and the creolists have collected data which supports their theories about the origin of Negro nonstandard speech in America. The dialectologists, for instance, have found that certain features of NNE existed at some prior time in England, while the creolists have shown that certain features of the English spoken by the early slaves in America are also found in other New World creole languages and in West African Pidgin English. But neither the dialectologists nor the creolists have as yet carried out extensive studies of current Negro nonstandard speech: the most thorough and reliable investigations of present-day Negro nonstandard speech have been undertaken and are being undertaken by the sociolinguists. One such investigation undertaken explicitly to attempt to resolve the dialectologist-versus-creolist controversy is Shuy, Fasold, and Wolfram's study of certain grammatical features in the speech of some white and Negro lower economic class children from Lexington, Mississippi. The investigators have concluded that there seems to be one deep structure difference (at least one) between the grammatical system of NNE speakers and the grammatical system of whites: NNE speakers use <u>be</u> to indicate habitual action

(they don't be sleepy for they aren't habitually sleepy), whereas whites do not use this habituative be (Wolfram 1969a:14).

In resolving the controversy between the dialectologists and the creolists, it is doubtless more important to compare the speech of Southern whites and Negroes of comparable socioeconomic backgrounds--as Shuy, Fasold, and Wolfram are doing--than it is to compare the speech of Northern whites and Negroes: the latter comparison necessarily involves some regional differences as well as ethnic differences, since the families of most Negroes once came from the South. Nevertheless, a detailed examination of Labov's Negro NYC and Wolfram's Negro DET data on grammatical variables should give at least some objective basis for determining whether there are or are not deep structure differences between NNE and the standard and nonstandard English spoken by whites.

2.7 GRAMMATICAL VARIABLES

2.7.1 The (Z_{pl}) Variable

There are three grammatical variables whose regular SE variants are phonetically the same: the noun plural variable, (Z_{pl}); the noun possessive variable, (Z_{pos}); and the verb third singular variable, (Z_{v}). Wolfram investigated the presence or absence of all three of the regular SE variants of these grammatical inflections: the [s] variant (carts versus cart, bat's versus bat, hates versus hate); the [z] variant (cars versus car, bar's versus bar, loves versus love); and the [ɨz] variant (boxes versus box, fox's versus fox, kisses versus kiss)--Negro DET:134. In contrast, Labov was concerned with the

presence or absence of only the [s] and [z] variants; furthermore, he investigated the absence of the [s] and [z] variants only when underlying / s,z / occurred as the final member of a consonant cluster (Negro NYC:158).

The same phonological constraints affect the loss of the noun plural, noun possessive, and verb third singular inflections. According to Labov (Negro NYC:159), the most important phonological difference stems from the phonological environment which follows, a consonant (the cats fought) or a vowel (the cats ate it).[18]

Labov's data (pp. 161-2) for the (Z_{pl}) variable is presented here in Table 17. The figures indicate the percentage of / s,z / loss.

For almost all groups / s,z / was lost less often before a word beginning with a vowel than before a word beginning with a consonant; the lower working class adults of Southern origin are the major exception to this pattern. In most cases / s,z / was lost less often in Style B, careful style, than in Style A, casual style; again, the lower working class Southerners are the major exception. The white Inwood groups had 18% loss in Style A before

---

[18]These same constraints affect the loss of word-final / s / and / z / when these consonants are not grammatical signals. Among the Negro peer groups, lames, and Inwood groups, there was no loss of monomorphemic / s / or / z / in either Style A or Style B when the following word began with a vowel (only Style B was elicited from the lames). For all the Negro peer groups except the Thunderbirds, the loss was under 10% in both styles when a consonant followed (the Thunderbirds, in contrast, showed a 40% absence in Style A--but 0% in Style B). For the lames, the loss was 2% in Style B when a consonant followed. The white Inwood groups showed no / s / or / z / loss at all from monomorphemic clusters (Negro NYC:161).

Table 17. Loss of Plural / s,z / for Peer Groups, Lames, and Adults

	Style A		Style B	
	#K	#V	#K	#V
Thunderbirds	13	08	15	09
Aces			08	00
Cobras	30	00	04	04
Jets	09	00	06	00
Oscar Brothers	21	10	11	06
Lames			14	09
Middle class adults	02	00	01	00
Working class adults				
Upper--Northern	10	13	01	00
Upper--Southern	14	00	06	00
Lower--Northern	03	00	00	00
Lower--Southern	10	14	12	19
Inwood groups	18	00	00	00

a consonant but 0% loss elsewhere. Generally, the adults had less / s,z / loss than the youth.

Labov (Negro NYC:163) concludes from his investigations that the plural is quite intact as a grammatical category in NNE speech. The small amount of disturbance in the plural, he says, is the result of 1) phonological processes of cluster simplification; 2) several individual items that have zero plurals in NNE (cent, year, and similar nouns of measure);[19] 3) a few speakers who show a much less uniform use of the plural inflection than most.

In contrast to Labov, Wolfram studied the absence of plural and possessive and third singular [s], [z], and [ɨz] without reference

---

[19]Such zero plurals for nouns of measure occur in Northern speech: He has two pound of butter, I have two pair of shoes, and so forth (Shuy 1967:30).

to the following phonological environment. Wolfram's tabulation included all real or potential instances of the [s], [z], and [ɨz] endings.

Wolfram's mean figures for the percentage of noun plural absence are as follows for the various social classes (Negro DET:143): UMN, 0.5%; LMN, 1.2%; UWN, 4.4%; LWN, 5.8%. Obviously the plural inflection was seldom absent, even for working class speakers. The absence of plural [s], [z], and [ɨz] was greater for nouns preceded by plural quantifiers like ten and many than for nouns not so preceded, and plural absence was still higher for nouns which were preceded by plural quantifiers and which themselves involved weights and measurements--inch, pound, cent, dollar (Negro DET:145).

In tabulating data to illustrate age and sex differences for the noun plural variable, Wolfram considered only noun phrases with a quantifier. The age stratification of (Z_{pl}) in Wolfram's study shows no consistent pattern. The greatest age-correlated difference occurred among upper working class Negroes, for whom the figures were: 17.2% absence for preadolescents, 3.4% for adolescents, and 5.0% for adults (Negro DET:150).

The males in Wolfram's study generally had greater plural inflection absence than the females. The greatest difference was again among the upper working class Negroes, males having 10.3% absence and females having 5.8% (Negro DET:149).

Linguistic conclusions about the (Z_{pl}) variable

There is clearly an underlying noun plural for NNE speakers. When the plural inflection is absent, this absence is often

attributable to a preceding plural quantifier; the plural inflection is even more likely to be absent if the noun itself is a noun of measure and is preceded by a plural quantifier.

Sociolinguistic conclusions about the (Z_{pl}) variable

Socioeconomic status. The middle class group in Labov's study generally showed less absence of plural [s] and [z] than the working class groups, and in fact Labov observes that the middle class adults were perfectly standard in their use of plural, possessive, and third singular inflections (Negro NYC:171). In Wolfram's study there was also a clear difference in plural [s], [z], and [ɨz] absence between the middle class groups and the working class groups. But even for the working classes, absence of the plural was not great.

Ethnic background. Wolfram excluded the upper middle class whites from his tabulation of noun plural absence, the implication being that these speakers always pronounced plural [s], [z], and [ɨz]. However, the upper middle class Negroes had only 0.5% absence, so it is questionable whether there is a significant ethnic difference for these middle class speakers. In Labov's study the white nonstandard-speaking Inwood youth showed plural [s] and [z] absence only in casual style when a consonant followed, whereas most of the Negro peer groups showed this absence in both styles and both environments, though the absence was sometimes zero before a following vowel. The lames had some [s] and [z] absence in careful style when a consonant followed, but no absence when a vowel followed (casual style was not elicited from the lames). This Negro NYC data suggests an ethnic difference with respect to the plural inflection.

Style. In Labov's study, plural [s] and [z] absence was generally greater in casual style than in careful style. Wolfram did not compute the stylistic difference for the (Z_{pl}) variable because the plural inflection was so seldom absent from the reading passages (Negro DET:147).

Age. Labov's adolescents and preadolescents generally showed plural [s] and [z] absence more often than adults. There was no clear age stratification in Wolfram's data.

Sex. Generally, Wolfram found that the absence of plural [s], [z], and [ɨz] was greater among males than among females.

2.7.2 The (Z_{pos}) Variable

Labov studied possessive [s] and [z] absence only when the underlying / s,z / occurred as the final member of a consonant cluster. Since the data is relatively scarce, Labov gives figures for all the NNE peer groups together (Negro NYC:161). In casual style, they had a 72% loss of / s,z / when the following word began with a consonant; no figure is given for when the following word began with a vowel. In careful style, the loss was 58% and 50% in the pre-consonantal and prevocalic environments respectively. From these statistics, Labov concludes that there is no stable noun possessive inflection in NNE, in the Negro speech which differs most radically from the speech of whites. But Negro adults are not NNE speakers: Labov notes (Negro NYC:171) that the middle class adults in his study did not lose noun plural or possessive or third singular / s,z / at all, and for the working classes the processes which remove the various / s,z / inflectional endings are now primarily phonological

rather than grammatical, except perhaps for the lower working class Southern group. Thus although the members of the preadolescent and adolescent Negro peer groups Labov studied do not have a stable possessive, Negro adults of all classes apparently do. So do white nonstandard-speaking youth: Labov says (Negro NYC:172) that among the white Inwood groups there was no loss of possessive / s,z /.

Wolfram gives the following mean percentages of possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz] absence for the various classes: UMN, 0.0%; LMN, 5.8%; UWN, 24.9%; LWN, 26.8% (Negro DET:141). Two important observations about this data are: 1) the upper middle class Negroes showed no absence of the possessive; and 2) there was a sharp distinction in possessive inflection absence between the working classes and the middle classes. But even for the working classes, possessive absence was much less frequent than absence of third singular [s], [z], and [ɨz] (see section 2.7.3 below).

Wolfram's figures (Negro DET:150) on age stratification for the (Z_{pos}) variable are presented in Table 18. The figures indicate percentages of [s], [z], and [ɨz] absence.

Table 18. Absence of Possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz]: By Age

	10-12	14-17	Adult
UMN	0.0	0.0	0.0
LMN	7.6	3.6	6.2
UWN	20.9	36.6	17.4
LWN	45.2	19.2	15.9

Overall, the adults had a lower rate of possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz] absence than the preadolescents and adolescents.

Wolfram found considerable sex differentiation for the (Z_{pos}) variable. His percentages (p. 149) are given in Table 19.

Table 19. Absence of Possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz]: By Sex

	Male	Female
UMN	0.0	0.0
LMN	10.3	1.4
UWN	18.8	31.1
LWN	30.1	23.5

Though the overall pattern is not entirely consistent, the lower middle and lower working classes followed the usual pattern of greater male use of stigmatized variants--which in this case means that males had a higher percentage of possessive inflection absence.

Linguistic conclusions about the (Z_{pos}) variable

Labov concludes that phonological processes generally account for the absence of possessive [s] and [z] among working class adults, and that all the Negro adults he studied apparently had a stable noun possessive. Labov also concludes, however, that the members of his Negro peer groups apparently did not have a stable possessive.

Wolfram concludes that the relatively low frequency of possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz] absence for his working class informants as a whole may seem to indicate that this inflection must be considered an optional realization of the NNE system. Wolfram goes on to note that in his study there were several individuals for whom the possessive was much more frequently absent than present (Negro DET:142). One is left wondering what conclusions Wolfram would draw if he were considering the working class youths apart from the adults.

Labov's Negro youths showed an absence of the noun possessive inflection somewhat more often than Wolfram's youths: Labov's youths had an absence of 50% to 58% in careful style, whereas Wolfram's working class youths had an absence of about 20% to 45% in careful style. This difference between Labov's and Wolfram's findings may be due to the differing origins of New York City Negroes and Detroit Negroes. The families of the majority of New York City Negroes have come from the eastern coastal area of the South, where Negroes seldom use the possessive inflection; the families of most Detroit Negroes have come from the central inland area of the South, where Negroes make much greater use of the possessive endings (Wolfram Negro DET:141; this explanation was suggested to Wolfram by William Stewart).

Sociolinguistic conclusions about the (Z_{pos}) variable

Socioeconomic status. Labov's middle class and Wolfram's upper middle class adults showed no absence of the noun possessive inflection. However, the working class adults in both studies did show some noun possessive absence. The working class youth in Wolfram's study showed considerably more absence of possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz] than the middle class youth.

Ethnic background. The upper middle class whites in Wolfram's study and the white Inwood youth in the Negro NYC study showed no absence of the regular noun possessive endings. The middle class Negro adults in Labov's study and all the upper middle class Negroes in Wolfram's study likewise showed no absence of the possessive, but all other Negro groups showed at least some absence.

Style. Labov's Negro peer groups showed greater absence of possessive [s] and [z] in casual style than in careful style. Wolfram did not compute stylistic variations because there were no potential cases of the noun possessive inflection in the reading passage (Negro DET:147).

Age. Labov says that possessive [s] and [z] absence is much greater for Negro youth than for adults; in fact, the difference is great enough to lead him to the conclusion that the noun possessive is a stable grammatical category for Negro adults but is not a stable category for Negro youth belonging to ghetto peer groups (NNE speakers). Wolfram's data also suggests that adults generally have a lower percentage of possessive inflection absence, but the differences he found were apparently not as great as the differences found in Labov's study (possibly because of the differing Southern origins of the Negroes in New York City and the Negroes in Detroit).

Sex. Wolfram found that the males in his study generally had a greater percentage of possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz] absence than the females.

2.7.3 The (Z_v) Variable

2.7.3.1 Verbs following the regular third singular pattern

Table 20 presents Labov's data (Negro NYC:161-2) on the loss of third singular / s,z /. The figures indicate what percentage of the time the / s / or / z / was lost.

For the Negro peer groups and lames, the percentage of third singular / s,z / loss was higher even than the percentage of possessive / s,z / loss, and the loss of both the possessive and the third

Table 20. Loss of Third Singular / s,z / for Peer Groups, Lames and Adults

	Style A		Style B	
	__#K	__#V	__#K	__#V
Thunderbirds	60	100	61	70
Aces			42	71
Cobras	53	67	93	86
Jets	55	78	59	70
Oscar Brothers	67	68	63	61
Lames			56	64
Middle class adults	00	00	00	00
Working class adults				
Upper--Northern	31	00	00	00
Upper--Southern	00		23	47
Lower--Northern	13	00	16	00
Lower--Southern	33	20	64	82
Inwood groups	00	00	00	00

singular inflections was much higher than the loss of plural / s,z /. Also, among these youths there was no uniform pattern of style shift for third singular / s,z / loss and, surprisingly, no tendency for a following vowel to reduce the loss of third singular / s,z /. Labov concludes from these facts that there is no underlying third singular inflection in NNE (Negro NYC:164).

In sharp contrast to the Negro peer groups and the lames, the white Inwood groups and the middle class Negro adults had no loss of third singular / s,z /. The working class adults had some third singular loss, but only the Southern groups showed this loss before a word beginning with a vowel. Clearly for these Negro adults (with the possible exception of the lower working class group from the

South), there was an underlying third singular present tense grammatical category.

On p. 136 of Negro DET, Wolfram gives percentages of third singular [s], [z], and [ɨz] absence for the various social classes. The upper middle class whites were not included because no clear-cut cases of third singular absence were found among these informants. For the other groups, the mean percentages of third singular absence are: UMN, 1.4%; LMN, 9.7%; UWN, 56.9%; LWN, 71.4%. There is obviously a sharp difference in third singular absence between the middle class groups and the working class groups. Wolfram notes that no informants showed the categorical absence of the third singular, though for some it was nearly categorical (p. 136).

For the middle class groups in Wolfram's study, there was almost no difference in third singular absence between interview style and reading style. But the working classes had 61.3% absence in interview style and only 15.6% absence in reading style (Negro DET:147).

Wolfram's figures on age stratification for the regular third singular inflection (Negro DET:150) are given in Table 21.

Table 21. Absence of Third Singular [s], [z], and [ɨz]: By Age

	10-12	14-17	Adult
UMN	2.5	1.9	0.0
LMN	21.2	1.5	5.8
UWN	63.8	56.4	50.6
LWN	80.5	76.5	57.1

The adults generally had less third singular absence than either the preadolescents or the adolescents, and the adolescents

had less than the preadolescents. The difference was quite sharp between the lower middle class preadolescents and adolescents.

The males of Wolfram's study generally had more third singular absence than the females, but the differences were all under 5% (Negro DET:149).

2.7.3.2 Verbs with irregular third singular forms

In addition to the verbs which simply add [s], [z] or [ɨz] in the third singular, there are some verbs which show the third singular present tense inflection plus some other change: _am_ ~ _are_ ~ _is_, _have_ ~ _has_, _do_ ~ _does_, _say_ ~ _says_. In addition there are the alternating past tense forms _were_ and _was_.

Labov found in his Negro NYC study that the NNE speakers generally showed Standard English person-number agreement for _am_, _is_, and _are_. There was practically no lack of agreement in the first singular: _I is_ or simply _I_ plus zero copula occurred well below 1% of the time for the preadolescent and adolescent Negro peer groups; _I are_ did not occur at all. In third person singular contexts, _are_ almost never occurred; either _is_ occurred, or there was no copula. _Is_ was used for _are_ 5% of the time or less (Negro NYC:221).

Although these NNE speakers almost always had SE person-number agreement for the present tense of the BE verb, they did not follow the SE agreement pattern for other verbs which have irregular third singular present tense forms, nor did they have the SE alternation between _were_ and _was_.

Labov found that among the preadolescent and adolescent Negro groups, the older Oscar Brothers, and the lames, _has_ was almost never

used; have was overwhelmingly the NNE form. The white Inwood groups, however, followed the SE pattern completely in their use of have and has. Does occurred even less frequently than has for the younger Negro peer groups, the older Oscar Brothers, and the lames; again, the Inwood groups followed the SE pattern. As for the third singular negative of do, the preadolescent and adolescent Negro peer groups almost never used doesn't, but the lames used doesn't over a third of the time and the Oscar Brothers used doesn't about half the time, don't the rest of the time. The white Inwood groups used doesn't about a third of the time. The SE form says was almost never used in third singular contexts by the preadolescent and adolescent Negro peer groups or the lames, but the Oscar Brothers used says in one case out of three and the Inwood groups regularly used says (Negro NYC:247). Middle class adults followed the SE pattern in all these cases. Among the working class groups, some did and some did not follow the SE pattern. Interestingly, some speakers used fairly regular agreement with these irregular verbs even though they did not normally use the third singular inflection for verbs with regular third singulars. On the other hand, many of the adults raised in the South preserved the NNE pattern almost completely (Negro NYC:249).

For the past tense of the BE verb, the Oscar Brothers used were nearly three times as often as was in contexts where were would be the Standard English form, and they used no were in the first and third singular. The lames had a similar pattern, and the white Inwood groups followed the SE pattern even more closely. But the preadolescent and adolescent Negro peer groups used was about five

times as often as were in contexts where were would be the SE form. Were was used quite erratically: it occurred as often in first and third singular contexts as in contexts where it regularly appears in SE. Thus was is clearly the overwhelming NNE form in all contexts (Negro NYC:249).

In Vol. 2 of Negro NYC (p. 182), Labov gives a table summarizing his data on verb agreement for these verbs with irregular third singular forms; were is also included. This data is presented in Table 22.

Table 22. Percentage of Standard Verb Agreement for Club Members, Lames, and Inwood Whites

Verb form	Club Members	Lames	Inwood whites
has (3rd sg.)	19	60	100
doesn't (3rd sg.)	03	36	32
does (3rd sg.)	00	13	100
says (3rd sg.)	04	00	100
were (2nd sg., and plural)	14	83	100

The club members (all the Negro peer groups except the Oscar Brothers) used do, don't, and say almost all of the time and have 81% of the time in third singular contexts; the club members used was 86% of the time in second person singular contexts and plural contexts. The Inwood whites were in sharpest contrast, since the only one of these five nonstandard forms they used was don't for doesn't, with don't occurring about two-thirds of the time. For three out of these five variables, the lames were much closer to the

white Inwood pattern than to the pattern of the Negro club members. This emphasizes the fact that not all Negro nonstandard speech is equally nonstandard. The lames used Negro nonstandard speech, but they were not speakers of NNE.

Linguistic conclusions about the (Z_v) variable

Labov concludes (Negro NYC:164) that there is no underlying third singular inflection in NNE, since: 1) the loss of third singular / s,z / was relatively high among the Negro peer groups and lames; 2) there was no regular pattern of style shift among these youth; 3) there was no tendency for a following vowel to reduce the loss of third singular / s,z /; and 4) with verbs having irregular third singular forms, the preadolescent and adolescent Negro peer groups used the base form in third singular contexts (except for the BE verb; NNE speakers usually had standard person-number agreement in the present tense and nearly always used was in all past tense contexts).

Another indication of basic unfamiliarity with the third singular inflection is the fact that it is extended to contexts where Standard English does not have it. This occurs in formal speech particularly, and more commonly among adults than among children (Labov Negro NYC:165). Wolfram notes the same phenomenon. Some of his recorded examples are (Negro DET:137-9):

I plays that too (1st sg. context)
We plays in the street (1st pl. context)
...you goes places (2nd sg. or pl. context)
They heals up (3rd pl. context)
He knows how to spells big words (infinitive)
I ain't sees him from 1928 (past participle).

Wolfram found that for working class speakers, third singular

[s], [z], and [iz] occurred over three times as often in third singular contexts as in other contexts. Still, the inappropriate use of the third singular inflection occurs often enough in the NNE speech to indicate basic unfamiliarity with this inflection.

Sociolinguistic conclusions about the (Z_V) variable

Socioeconomic status. In both studies, most of the middle class adults showed no third singular absence. In Labov's study the working class adults definitely showed some third singular [s] and [z] absence, and the working class adults in Wolfram's study showed 50% to 60% absence of the third singular.

Ethnic background. Neither the upper middle class whites of Wolfram's study nor the working class Inwood youth of Labov's study showed any third singular inflection absence for verbs with regular third singulars. In contrast, all of the Negro groups showed at least some absence, though the absence was relatively slight for the middle class groups, particularly the upper middle class speakers of Wolfram's study. With verbs having irregular third singular forms, the nonstandard-speaking Inwood groups followed the standard pattern in four cases out of five; the preadolescent and adolescent Negro peer groups, on the other hand, consistently used base forms in third singular present contexts (and used *was* rather than *were* in past contexts).

Style. The Negroes in Labov's study showed no regular pattern of style shift. For the Negro middle classes in Wolfram's study there was little stylistic difference (but these groups showed little overall absence of the third singular inflection). For the

working classes there was a sharp stylistic difference: they had 61.3% absence in interview style but only 15.6% in reading style.

Age. In Labov's study, the Negro youth showed far greater third singular [s] and [z] absence than the adults. As with the possessive inflection, Labov concludes that while the Negro peer group youth (the NNE speakers) have no underlying third singular grammatical category, the adults do (with the possible exception of the lower working class Southern speakers). In Wolfram's study, the adults generally had less third singular absence than the preadolescents or adolescents, but Wolfram draws no particular conclusions from this difference.

Sex. Wolfram found that the males in his study generally had slightly greater third singular absence than the females.

2.7.4 Copula Absence

Another variable Labov and Wolfram studied was the presence or absence of *is* and *are* (*he is going* versus *he going*, *they are funny* versus *they funny*). As with the absence of past tense and past participle inflections, linguists disagree as to whether copula absence is primarily a phonological phenomenon or primarily a grammatical phenomenon. Labov advocates the former explanation, while Wolfram and creolists like Stewart and Bailey advocate the latter.

Labov notes[20] that since *is* and *are* are often missing from Negro

---

[20]Most of the information on Labov's study of copula deletion is taken from his 1968 paper "Contraction, Deletion, and Inherent Variability of the English Copula," which is based on the Negro NYC study. This paper will be referred to here as "Copula"; the page

nonstandard speech, some linguists--especially those who have studied creole languages--have concluded that there is no copula or auxiliary BE verb. But, says Labov, there are several other contexts where BE verbs do appear. For example (Copula:6-8; Negro NYC:177-84):

1. was and were appear regularly to indicate past tense:

   I was small; I was sump'm about one years ol' baby.
   She was likin' me...she was likin' George too.

2. I'm is regularly found (the contraction of I am to I'm is semicategorical in NNE, but the / m / is rarely, perhaps never, deleted--Negro NYC:178):

   I'm tired, Jeanette.
   I'm not no strong drinker.

3. ain't is used as a negative BE form:

   It ain't no cat can't get in no coop.
   My sons, they ain't but so big.

   Labov says one could argue that ain't is simply a negative marker, but along with a sentence like they ain't black one also finds they not black. Therefore ain't seems to be a negative BE form.

4. iss [is], thas [ð æ s], whas [wəs] are found in the great majority of cases, rather than just it for it is, and so forth (Negro NYC:180).[21]

---

numbers will refer to the ERIC document. The same basic data and arguments are found in somewhat more detail in Chapter 3 of Negro NYC.

[21] However, Labov says later in Negro NYC (p. 212; p. 38 of Copula) that the final [s] of each of these forms is not the [s] of a contracted and assimilated is. Rather, the process is as follows:

it ## iz	
it ## ə z	vowel reduction
it ## z	contraction
is ## z	assibilation of / t /
is ##	deletion

Labov says this assibilation of / t / occurs among white nonstandard speakers, but with a somewhat lower frequency than for NNE speakers.

In addition to these various BE forms, one consistently finds is and are under certain conditions even though these forms are often missing before complements and participle forms. For example, (Copula:7-8; Negro NYC:183):

1. is and are appear under emphatic stress:

   Allah is God.
   He is an expert.

2. is and are appear in clause-final positions after ellipsis has taken place:

   (You ain't the best sounder, Eddie!)
   I ain't! He is!
   It always somebody tougher than you are.

3. is and are appear in embedded questions, after wh-attraction:

   I don't care what you are.
   Do you see where that person is?

4. is and are are often found in yes/no questions:

   Is he dead?
   Are you down?

This list of examples is not quite as comprehensive as Labov's, but it should be clear that Negro nonstandard speakers do use various BE forms, including is and are. (The quotes are mostly from the youth in the Negro NYC study.) The question, then, is how to account for the frequent deletion of is and are before complements and participles.

Both the preceding and the following grammatical environment affect copula deletion. Labov says that the most important constraint on deletion in NNE and on contraction in SE is whether the subject is a pronoun or whether it is some other noun phrase (Copula:16; Negro NYC:193). As for the grammatical environment following the copula

position, there are five relevant categories: a noun phrase, a predicate adjective, a locative, a present participle verb, and the particular item gonna (going to). Labov's data for the contraction and deletion of is in these preceding and following environments (Copula:17-18; Negro NYC 194-5) is given in Tables 23 and 24.

Table 23. Percentage of Full, Contracted, and Deleted Forms of is with Pronoun Subject Versus Other Noun Phrase Subject

Style A (Group or casual style)

	T-Birds		Cobras		Jets		Oscar Bros.		Working class adults		Inwood whites	
	NP_	Pro_	NP_	Pro_	NP_	Pro_	NP_	Pro_	NP_	Pro_	NP_	Pro_
Full	44	07	45	00	54	00	51	04	61	01	41	01
Contr.	15	33	19	23	19	42	23	33	26	72	59	99
Del.	42	60	36	77	27	58	26	64	14	27	00	00

Style B (Careful style)

Full	63	05	56	04	67	00	85	25	75	04	26	00
Contr.	25	44	26	29	15	39	11	60	17	80	74	100
Del.	12	51	18	67	18	61	04	15	08	16	00	00

It is immediately obvious that for all groups the percentage of contracted and deleted forms was much greater with a pronoun preceding than with some other kind of noun phrase preceding. For the preadolescent and adolescent peer groups in both styles and for the older Oscar Brothers in group style (Style A), the percentage of deleted forms was almost always much higher than the percentage of contracted forms. But for the Oscar Brothers in careful style (Style B) and for the adults and Inwood groups, the reverse was true. The white Inwood groups, in fact, had no deleted forms whatsoever.

Table 24 gives percentages of full, contracted, and deleted forms of is according to the grammatical category of the complement, for all NNE styles combined. Considering contraction and deletion together, the least contraction and deletion occurred before a noun phrase, the next least before a predicate adjective or locative, the next least before a present participle, and the most before gonna. The pattern for deletion alone was the same. But the pattern for contraction was reversed: as deletion increased, contraction decreased. For both groups in almost all cases the percentage of deletion was higher than the percentage of contraction. That was particularly true when a present participle or gonna followed.

Table 24. Percentage of Full, Contracted, and Deleted Forms of is According to Grammatical Category of Complement

	__NP	__PA	__Loc	__V + ing	__ gonna
Thunderbirds					
Full	40	25	30	04	00
Contracted	37	27	34	30	12
Deleted	23	48	36	66	88
Jets					
Full	37	34	21	07	03
Contracted	31	30	27	19	03
Deleted	32	36	52	74	93

A comparison of Table 23 with Table 24 makes it apparent that the influence of the following environment upon is deletion is not as important as the influence of the preceding environment, though both are significant. Labov's careful analysis shows that neither of these environmental constraints is dependent upon the other, though there is some degree of interaction (Copula:22; Negro NYC 198).

The most important phonological constraint for the contraction and deletion of is turns out to be whether the preceding pronoun or noun phrase ends with a consonant or a vowel.[22] Most pronouns end with a stressed vowel, and as already noted, there are almost no full forms after pronouns. There are fewer full forms after noun phrases ending in vowels than after noun phrases ending in consonants, but in both cases there are far more full forms than after pronouns. From these facts, it is apparent that the effect of a preceding pronoun upon contraction and deletion is only partly dependent upon the effect of a preceding vowel. This opposing effect of a preceding vowel versus a preceding consonant holds for all syntactic environments except before a following gonna, where there are almost no full forms at all (Copula:32,34; Negro NYC:201,206).

In NNE, are very rarely occurs in full form, and even contracted forms occur quite infrequently; are is usually deleted. Labov (Negro NYC:219) presents data showing that deletion of are occurs much more frequently than deletion of is. Overall, are deletion occurred 79% of the time for Labov's Negro adolescent groups and 84% of the time for the preadolescents; when a present participle or gonna followed, the adolescents deleted are 87% of the time and the preadolescents deleted are 91% of the time. Apparently the working class adults deleted are about 60% of the time in casual style. In careful style, upper working class adults deleted are about 14% of the

---

[22] Labov says that the effect of a following vowel or consonant is inconsequential for younger groups, though it gradually assumes more importance with age (Copula:30; Negro NYC:244).

time, whereas lower working class adults deleted _are_ about 65% of the time. Middle class adults did not delete either _is_ or _are_. (These percentages are my calculations, based on raw data from Labov Negro NYC, pp. 219 and 241.)

Differences in the following grammatical environment do not seem to have nearly as much influence on _are_ contraction and deletion as upon the contraction and deletion of _is_. Judging from Labov's explanation (Copula:41-2; Negro NYC:219-20), _are_ might be deleted more often in _r_-less areas than in _r_-pronouncing areas, and indeed a comparison of Labov's data with Wolfram's (Negro DET:174) suggests that this is so. Labov points out that for NNE speakers, underlying / r / frequently becomes a vowel in final position, particularly when the following word begins with a consonant. Once this / r / vocalization rule has operated on _are_ to give / aə /, the first vowel is weakened and then reduced to schwa; the second schwa is then lost; and finally the first schwa is lost by contraction. Contraction of _are_ is thus equivalent to deletion. This explanation accounts for the fact that though _are_ is very frequently deleted, contracted forms are seldom found. "In any case," Labov concludes, "the net result is that far fewer _are_ forms survive in NNE than _is_: for many speakers, deletion of _are_ is (semi-)categorical" (Copula:42; see also Negro NYC:220).

The question of the relationship between the contraction of _are_ and the deletion of _are_ brings up the general question of the relationship between contraction and deletion in NNE. Basing his conclusion on empirical investigation, Labov states emphatically:

"the followi ; general principle holds without exception: wherever SE can contract, NNE can delete is and are and vice-versa; wherever SE cannot contract, NNE cannot delete is and are, and vice-versa" (Copula:9; Negro NYC:185). From this observation and from additional study of his data, Labov draws significant conclusions about the relation between contraction and deletion in NNE. Contraction occurs first, in transformational terms; deletion follows contraction. Suppose, for example, that in a particular case there are 20% full forms, 20% contracted forms, and 60% deleted forms. If deletion follows contraction, then one should describe this situation by saying that 80% of the forms are contracted and 75% of these contracted forms are then deleted.

A lengthy discussion of Labov's conclusions about the relation between contraction and deletion is inappropriate here, and such a sketchy outline as this may not be convincing. (The interested reader may wish to consult Copula:9-21 or Negro NYC:185-98.) But it is important in understanding the following discussion to remember Labov's assumption that the contraction rule precedes the deletion rule.

On p. 241 of Negro NYC, Labov presents data showing social and stylistic stratification in the use of the contraction and deletion rules. Labov makes several significant observations about this data: 1) in Style A, middle class adults used the contraction rule for is about half as much as the working class adults and less than half as much as most Negro peer groups; 2) all groups used the deletion rule for is much more in Style A than in Style B

(except the middle class adults, who did not use the rule at all), but the stylistic shift was more marked among adults than among the youth; 3) the preadolescent lames very seldom used the deletion rule for _is_, and the adolescent lames used the rule considerably less often than the Negro peer groups; 4) the white Inwood groups and the middle class adults did not delete either _is_ or _are_ at all; 5) the middle class adults were the only group which had a high number of unreduced _are_'s; and 6) the Negro peer groups showed no clear stylistic shift for _are_, whereas the adults generally showed a sharp stylistic difference (Negro NYC:242-3).

One important linguistic concern which remains for discussion is the question of whether copula deletion is primarily a phonological phenomenon or primarily a grammatical phenomenon.

In Labov's scheme, the removal of _are_ is taken care of by phonological rules prior to his deletion rule; a rule operates to vocalize the final / r / and, after other rules have operated, deletion is finally effected by the contraction rule (see p. 89 of the present study). _Will_ is removed somewhat similarly. Labov's deletion rule was designed to remove a lone oral continuant between word boundaries (Copula:36; Negro NYC:209). Thus the / m / of contracted _am_ will not be deleted, since it is not an oral consonant; this restriction in the rule is necessary if the rule is to account for the fact that the / m / of _am_ is rarely, if ever, deleted. The non-continuant / d / of contracted _had_ will not be deleted either; this restriction is also necessary because _had_ appears frequently in NNE. The deletion rule will, however, delete the / s / or / z /

of contracted is and also the / s / or / z / of contracted has, plus the / v / of contracted have.

The deletion rule depends upon a grammatical constraint: these oral continuants are deleted only when they occur alone between word boundaries. Nevertheless, the rule is a phonological one. Thus both are and is are deleted by phonological rules, according to Labov.

Wolfram treats copula absence under the heading of grammatical variables, but he too notes that both grammatical and phonological facts are needed to describe this copula absence in NNE.

On p. 169 of Negro DET, Wolfram gives percentages for contraction and zero realization (absence) of the copula, both is and are together. The mean percentages are given here in Table 25.

Table 25. Percentage of Copula Contraction and Zero Realization: By Social Class

	Contraction	Zero Realization	Total
UMW	79.8	0.0	79.8
UMN	67.9	4.7	72.6
LMN	63.3	10.9	74.2
UWN	40.1	37.3	77.4
LWN	25.0	56.9	81.9

The combined percentages of contraction and zero realization are approximately the same for all groups. But the relative percentages of contraction and zero realization vary regularly: the lower the social class, the lower the rate of contraction and, correspondingly, the higher the rate of zero realization. (The upper middle class whites, however, have no zero realization.)

As Wolfram points out (p. 168), this data confirms Labov's observation that zero realization (deletion) in NNE corresponds to contraction in SE. (Also, it was partly this sort of regular correspondence which led Labov to the conclusion that deletion operates upon forms which have already been contracted.)

Like Labov, Wolfram also investigated the influence of the preceding and following grammatical environment on copula contraction and absence; unlike Labov, however, Wolfram investigated the effect of these environmental influences on <u>are</u> as well as on <u>is</u>. This data (pp. 170, 172) is given in Tables 26 and 27.

Table 26. Percentage of Copula Contraction and Zero Realization When Preceded by a Noun Phrase or a Pronoun: By Social Class

	Contraction		Zero Realization		Total	
	NP__	Pro__	NP__	Pro__	NP__	Pro__
UMW	46.5	96.2	0.0	0.0	45.6	96.2
UMN	39.3	92.2	1.8	6.2	40.8	98.4
LMN	40.0	83.1	6.3	13.8	46.3	96.9
UWN	24.3	49.4	18.9	40.7	43.2	90.1
LWN	20.5	32.4	30.1	63.1	50.6	95.5

The social stratification pattern displayed in Table 26 is the same as that found in Table 25. But in addition to showing regular social stratification, Table 26 reveals that contraction and zero realization both occurred approximately twice as often after a pronoun as after some other noun phrase. Contraction or zero realization was, in fact, almost categorical after pronouns.

Table 27 shows that when a pronoun preceded, contraction and zero realization together generally occurred about 90% of the time

Table 27. Percentage of Contraction and Zero Realization of Copula When Preceded by a Pronoun and Followed by Five Kinds of Complements

	__PA	__PN	__Loc	__V + ing	__ gonna
Middle class					
Contraction	95.1	93.3	80.0	87.7	61.9
Zero Realization	1.6	4.2	13.3	11.3	33.3
Total	96.7	97.5	93.3	99.0	95.2
Working class					
Contraction	55.7	42.1	53.6	39.3	3.3
Zero Realization	36.5	47.3	44.4	50.1	78.9
Total	92.2	89.4	98.0	89.3	81.9

or more in each of the five grammatical environments following the copula position. (This generally left a much lower percentage of full forms than in Labov's somewhat comparable table, given here as Table 24. One major cause for the difference is that Wolfram tabulated both *is* and *are*, whereas Labov tabulated only *is*. Another major cause is that Wolfram tabulated only those forms which had a preceding pronoun, whereas Labov also tabulated forms with other preceding noun phrases.) Zero realization was greater before predicate nominatives than before predicate adjectives, greater before V+ *ing* than before predicate nominatives, and by far the greatest before *gonna*. The percentages for zero realization before predicate locatives fell somewhere in between. Wolfram points out (pp. 172-3) that the middle class's relatively high percentage of zero realization before *gonna* suggests that zero realization preceding *gonna* is not as stigmatized as zero realization in other environments. For the middle class, contraction decreased consistently from the predicate adjective environment to the *gonna* environment, reading the table from left to right; thus contraction generally decreased as zero realization increased. For the

working class, the pattern of decrease did not show quite the same regularity, though generally there was a decrease in contraction from the predicate adjective environment to the gonna environment. For the latter environment, the working class speakers had only 3.3% contraction, compared with 78.9% zero realization.

Wolfram gives percentages of contraction and zero realization for is and are separately (p. 174); these are given here in Table 28.

Table 28. Percentage of Contraction and Zero Realization of Copula When Underlying Form is is or are: By Social Class

	Contraction		Zero Realization		Total	
	is	are	is	are	is	are
UMN	66.7	69.5	0.7	7.6	67.4	77.1
LMN	68.6	64.4	5.1	17.9	73.7	82.3
UWN	54.9	24.4	17.2	46.9	72.1	74.3
LWN	36.0	19.5	37.1	68.8	73.1	88.3

The combined percentages of contraction and zero realization were somewhat greater for are than for is, but the outstanding difference is that zero realization was approximately twice as great for are as for is. Wolfram points out one important reason for this difference: absence of final [r] is effected by a general phonological process in Negro nonstandard speech (see my discussion of the (r) variable), whereas no such process generally operates to cause the absence of final [s] and [z] (Negro DET:174).

Slight decreases in zero copula realization were found for the middle class Negro groups as they moved from interview style to reading style (their percentages are under 8% for both styles).

For the working class, the difference was great: 41.8% zero realization for interview style, 7.9% for reading style (Negro DET:177).

On p. 179, Wolfram gives percentages of zero copula realization for three age groups; this data is given here in Table 29.

Table 29. Percentage of Copula Zero Realization: By Age

	10-12	14-17	Adult
UMN	6.2	5.1	3.1
LMN	18.0	8.2	6.4
UWN	53.5	30.3	27.4
LWN	64.7	67.7	38.4

The adults had less zero realization than the adolescents, and the adolescents had less than the preadolescents. The difference was especially great between lower working class adults and youth.

The percentage of zero realization was consistently higher for the males in Wolfram's study than for the females. Wolfram's data (p. 178) is given here in Table 30.

Table 30. Percentage of Copula Zero Realization: By Sex

	Male	Female
UMN	6.4	3.1
LMN	16.4	5.3
UWN	45.3	28.7
LWN	66.3	47.5

Linguistic conclusions about copula absence

Copula contraction and deletion are affected by both grammatical and phonological constraints. When a pronoun precedes the underlying copula, contraction or deletion is almost categorical; however, these processes occur much less frequently when some other kind of noun

phrase precedes. Contraction and deletion are also affected by the following grammatical environment: deletion, in particular, occurs much more frequently before gonna than before any other environment. The most important phonological constraint is the effect of a preceding vowel versus the effect of a preceding consonant: a preceding vowel favors deletion.

Labov and Wolfram agree that there is clearly an underlying copula in NNE. Labov says his study shows that SE and NNE differences in the use of the copula are low-level; they do not represent deep structure differences. But in reference to Stewart's "Continuity and Change in American Negro Dialects," Labov also remarks that the situation may have been much different in eighteenth-century or nineteenth-century America, and in fact the situation may be different even today with speakers heavily influenced by Caribbean patterns, as in Florida (Copula:51).

Sociolinguistic conclusions about copula absence

Socioeconomic status. In Labov's study, it was found that 1) in casual style, middle class adults used the contraction rule for is about half as often as working class adults; 2) unlike working class adults, middle class adults did not omit either is or are; and 3) middle class adults were the only group which had a high number of unreduced are's. In Wolfram's study, the combined percentages of copula contraction and zero realization were approximately equal for all groups. However, there was regular variation in the relative percentages of contraction and zero realization: the lower the social class, the lower the contraction rate and, correspondingly, the

higher the rate of zero realization. There seems to be a definite break between the middle classes and the working classes: the middle classes had both contraction and zero realization decidedly less often than the working classes.

Ethnic background. Neither the white middle class adults in Wolfram's study nor the nonstandard-speaking Inwood groups of Labov's study had any copula absence. In contrast, all Negro groups in Wolfram's study and all Labov's Negro groups except the middle class adults showed at least some degree of absence.

Style. Labov found that middle class adults did not use the deletion rule at all, but all other groups used the deletion rule for *is* much more in casual speech than in careful speech. Wolfram found that zero realization occurred less often in reading style than in interview style. The difference was slight for middle class Negroes, who had little zero realization in either style. For working class Negroes, however, the style shift was great.

Age. The adolescent Negro peer groups in Labov's study had a much higher percentage of deleted *is* forms than contracted forms, while the reverse was true for the adults. Also, the Negro peer groups showed no clear stylistic shift for *are*, whereas generally the adults had a sharp stylistic difference. Wolfram found that the adults showed less copula absence than the adolescents, and the adolescents showed less than the preadolescents.

Sex. In Wolfram's study, the males had more copula absence than the females.

2.7.5 Invariant *be*

Wolfram studied what he calls "invariant *be*": the use of just uninflected *be* where Standard English would have *will be* (*I be here tomorrow* for SE *I will* (or *I'll*) *be here tomorrow*); the use of just *be* where SE would have *would be* (*if I was to stay longer, I be frozen* for SE *if I were to stay longer, I would* (or *I'd*) *be frozen*); and the use of *be* where SE would have *am*, *is*, or *are* (one possible "translation" of NNE *I be sad* is *I am sad frequently*).

In a paper first made available in 1966 through the Educational Resources Information Center, Marvin Loflin explains that in Negro nonstandard speech, a sentence like *I be busy* may be three ways ambiguous: it may mean *I will be busy*, *I would be busy*, or *I am* $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{frequently}\\\text{habitually}\end{matrix}\right\}$ *busy*. In order to account for the latter interpretation Loflin postulates a habituative category in NNE.[23]

More recent research supports Loflin's observation that sentences like *I be busy* may be three ways ambiguous in NNE and that a new grammatical category is needed to account for some instances of *be*. Wolfram thoroughly discusses current findings on invariant *be* and, in so doing, gives examples (pp. 180-5) of some actually occurring instances of the three uses of *be* that Loflin notes:

1. *be* apparently corresponding to SE *will be*:

> I be 12 February 7.
> He be in in a few minutes.
> I been working there since 'bout January...
> couple more weeks it be six months.

---

[23]This paper was published in *Glossa* in 1967. See Loflin 1967a: 26-8.

2. be apparently corresponding to SE would be:[24]

> I used to day-dream, I used to drift off in my own little world, and she just be talking and I wouldn't listen to a word she was saying.
> Well, I used to hang around with this Puerto Rican girl...She be talking and you couldn't understand a thing she be saying.

3. be marking an intermittent activity or state and corresponding in surface form (though not entirely in meaning) to SE am, is, or are (Wolfram's analysis shows that this use of be occurs about three times as often as the other two uses in the speech of the Negro working classes--p. 198):

> They don't be mean.
> See, we pass from class to class, we don't be in the same one.
> They sometimes be incomplete and things like that.
> He sometimes be a operator doctor.

For the last set of examples, the original context of the sentences made it apparent that be corresponded in surface form to are or is, depending on the subject. Don't be apparently corresponded roughly to SE aren't; it is interesting and quite possibly significant that be is not negated here as if it were an ordinary BE verb.

Henceforth the term "habituative be" will be used here to refer to the occurrence of invariant be where SE would have am, is, or are (the terms "distributive be" and "iterative be" are also in use--see Negro DET:195). An instance of invariant be is considered habituative if, in the given context, the be does not seem equivalent to SE will be or would be.

As in the last two of the examples from Wolfram, be expressing an intermittent activity or state is often accompanied by an adverb

---

[24]Apparently the / l / of contracted will and the / d / of contracted would are deleted by phonological processes which delete final / l /'s and final / d /'s. See for example Negro DET:184-5.

indicating frequency of occurrence. Ralph Fasold (1969b) has made an extensive study of the co-occurrence of invariant be with these adverbs. He listened to recorded interviews of 76 Negro speakers, both male and female, and divided among children, adolescents, and adults. Of these 76 speakers, 56 used invariant be in the interview for a total of 357 instances. Out of these 357 instances, 84--over 25%--occurred with frequency adverbs, as shown in Table 31 (Fasold 1969b:767).

Table 31. Co-occurrence of Invariant be and Frequency Adverbs

Meaning	Adverb	No. of Occurrences of be	Total in Classification
Rare occurrence	hardly	2	
	very seldom	1	3
Occasional occurrence	sometimes	39	
	some days	2	
	every now and then	1	
	quite a bit	1	43
Frequent occurrence	_____	0	0
Usual occurrence	usually	7	
	on the holidays, on Halloween	3	
	mostly	3	
	generally	1	
	on most occasions	1	15
Regular occurrence	every time/day/morning	10	
	at night, in the nighttime/morning	5	15
How often? How long? (Continuous occurrence)	always	6	
	all the time	2	8
			84

In addition to occurring with the frequency adverbs in Table 31, be also occurred fairly often in subordinate clauses beginning with whenever or when and in main clauses modified by a when(ever) clause:

> When people be talking, she'a give you a E right quick.
> When he turns it, one be going this way and the other be going all around.

Fasold found 37 occurrences of be in sentences with the subordinators when and whenever. Thus be co-occurred with a when(ever) clause 11.5% of the time and with a frequency adverb 25.8% of the time (Fasold 1969b:767).

To show the relevance of these statistics, Fasold also tabulated the co-occurrence of am, is, and are with the frequency adverbs for 18 of the informants who used invariant be. Out of 538 instances of am, is, and are, only 8 co-occurred with a frequency adverb, and in two cases the so-called frequency adverb may not actually have been an adverb of frequency. Thus while a frequency adverb co-occurred with be over 25% of the time, such an adverb co-occurred with am, is, or are only about 1% of the time (Fasold 1969b: 767).

In his Negro NYC study (p. 234), Labov tabulated the percentage of habituative be, of be in environments which would require am, is, or are in Standard English. This data is presented in Table 32. The figures indicate the percentages of be compared with the total number of forms in contexts where SE would require am, is, or are; the data is for careful style, Style B.

Labov speculates that the relatively high occurrence of be in contexts requiring are in SE may be due to the high deletion rate

Table 32. Percentage of *be* in SE *am*, *is*, and *are* Contexts

SE context:	*am*	*is*	*are*
Thunderbirds	14	07	37
Jets	13	06	29
Cobras	16	15	32
Oscar Brothers	24	00	16

for *are* in NNE speech. However, as Labov also notes, that kind of explanation can hardly account for the fact that *be* occurs in SE *am* contexts more often than in *is* contexts, since *am* is almost never deleted in NNE speech but *is* fairly often is deleted (Negro NYC:234). None of Labov's attempts to account for these various differences are convincing.

Surprisingly, Labov found that though the Negro peer groups used habituative *be* in careful conversation (single interviews, Style B), there was very little use of habituative *be* in group sessions. This distribution is unusual because the group sessions usually showed the most regular application of NNE rules. It is clear, though, that habituative *be* was used more frequently by these peer groups than by the other groups Labov has studied. None of the whites in his earlier *Social Stratification* study used habituative *be*, and even the white Inwood youth did not use it. The lames in the Negro NYC study used this *be* somewhat less frequently than the Negro peer groups, and this pattern has generally proved characteristic of NNE features. Also, habituative *be* is heavily age-graded. It occurs frequently among preadolescents and adolescents in ghetto areas, but adults rarely use it: Labov has collected only a few examples of habituative *be* in all of his adult interviews. Thus it seems that habituative *be* is an

emphatic form which characterizes the deliberative speech of Negro peer groups in ghetto areas (Negro NYC:235).

Wolfram in his Negro DET study simply counted for each interview the number of invariant be occurrences (be for SE will be, be for SE would be, and habituative be--the word be in SE am, is, and are contexts). This data (p. 198) is given in Table 33.

Table 33. Total Occurrences of Invariant be

	(will) be	(would) be	Habituative be	Ambiguous
UMN	2	0	2	1
LMN	0	0	2	4
UWN	3	5	21	14
LWN	8	7	69	47

The figures for habituative be are particularly interesting: this be occurred only 4 times in the speech of the middle class Negroes, but it occurred 21 times in upper working class speech and 69 times in lower working class speech.

Wolfram found that invariant be was categorically absent for upper middle class white speakers and that it only rarely occurred among middle class Negroes: only 5 of 24 middle class Negro informants had any occurrences of invariant be at all. The mean number of occurrences for the Negro groups was: UMN, 0.4; LMN, 0.5; UWN, 3.5; LWN 10.9. There was a decided difference not only between the middle classes and the working classes but also between the upper working class and the lower (Negro DET:197-8).

As for style differences, Wolfram found no instances of invariant be in the reading style of his informants (p. 200). But of course the reading passages contained no instances of invariant be.

Invariant be was rarely used by the middle classes, so for them the age stratification was slight. However there were definite age differences among the working class speakers. For the upper working class, the age stratification was as follows: 4.3 mean number of occurrences for the preadolescents, 4.8 for the adolescents, and 1.5 for the adults. For the lower working class informants, the stratification between the youth and the adults was much sharper: the figures were 16.3 occurrences for the preadolescents, 12.8 for the adolescents, 3.8 for the adults. Wolfram summarizes this data concisely: "Invariant be is a feature characteristic of working-class pre-adolescent and teenage speech" (Negro DET:201).

The males in Wolfram's study used invariant be slightly more often than the females (Negro DET:200).

Sociolinguistic conclusions about invariant be (particularly habituative be)

Clearly, as both Labov's work and Wolfram's work show, it is typically ghetto youth who use invariant be to indicate actions which are habitual or iterative and to indicate (usually simultaneously) a general condition or state of affairs over a period of time.

A few additional brief statements can be made about the socio-linguistic stratification of invariant be:

Socioeconomic status. Invariant be was rarely used by the middle classes in Labov's and Wolfram's investigations. Also, invariant be was more characteristic of the lower working class than of the upper.

Ethnic status. Apparently whites do not use habituative be; neither Wolfram nor Labov found any instances in white speech. Even the white nonstandard-speaking Inwood groups of Labov's study showed no use of habituative be.

Style. Wolfram found no instances of invariant be in reading style, which is not illogical since the reading passages contained no instances of this be. But surprisingly, Labov found few instances of habituative be in the casual speech of the Negro peer groups. Rather, habituative be was characteristic of their careful speech.

Age. The adults in the Negro NYC study rarely used habituative be: it occurred almost exclusively in the speech of adolescents and preadolescents.

Sex. The males of Wolfram's study used invariant be slightly more often than the females.

2.7.6 Multiple Negation

Multiple negation involves the realization of one underlying negative at two or more points within a sentence. For example, a single underlying negative element is realized at five different places in the sentence We ain't never had no trouble about none of us pullin' out no knife (Negro DET:153). This multiple realization of a single negative element is foreign to Standard English, though white nonstandard speakers use multiple negatives. Still, there are both quantitative and qualitative differences between NNE speakers and white nonstandard speakers in their use of multiple negation. NNE speakers extend negative concord to all indefinites in a clause more often than white nonstandard speakers do, and they also use some

types of multiple negative constructions not found among whites. There are at least two such constructions not found among even nonstandard-speaking whites:[25]

1. negative inversion, in which the reversal of tense marker and subject characteristic of questions occurs in declarative sentences (examples from Negro NYC:284-6):

   Doesn't nobody really know that it's a god, you know.
   Can't nobody stop it.
   Won't nobody catch us.
   Wasn't nobody home.

2. extension of a negative element in one clause to a pre-verbal auxiliary in a following clause (examples from Negro NYC:282):

   Well, wasn't much I couldn't do.
   It ain't no cat can't get in no coop.

   In SE, the first of these two sentences would be Well, there wasn't much I could do; the second would be something like There isn't any cat that can get in any coop.

White nonstandard speakers do not use either of these types of NNE multiple negation.

NNE use of multiple negation also differs quantitatively from that of other speakers, both white and Negro. Labov found (Negro NYC:277) that 98% to 99% of the time, the Negro peer groups extended a single underlying negative to all indefinites within a clause. This almost categorical use of multiple negation was found in both

---

[25] Both Labov and Wolfram discuss the types of multiple negation which characterize NNE. See Negro DET:153-5 and Negro NYC:275-87. Labov and Wolfram mention also a type of multiple negative construction which is used by some white nonstandard speakers, but which was not used by Labov's Inwood white groups (Negro NYC:276) and is not used by white nonstandard speakers in Detroit (Negro DET:165). This type of multiple negation involves the extension of negative concord from an indefinite preceding a verb phrase to a pre-verbal auxiliary: Nobody didn't like her, Nobody can't step on her foot (Negro DET:154).

casual speech and careful speech. The lames used such multiple negation 90% of the time in careful speech (the only style elicited from them), whereas the Inwood whites had 80% negative concord (again, in careful speech). While the great majority of the Negro peer group members categorically extended a negative to all indefinites within a clause, only 4 of the 15 Inwood youth did so (Negro NYC:277). The adults showed such negative concord much less often than the Negro peer groups (Negro NYC:279).

Wolfram similarly tabulated the instances of unrealized and realized multiple negation for each informant. "Realized" multiple negation apparently involved the extension of a single underlying negative to all indefinites within a clause. When a single underlying negative had not been extended to all indefinites in a clause, the clause was considered an instance of unrealized multiple negation. In the following sentences, for example, only one element which could be negated has been negated; this is unrealized multiple negation:

He didn't do anything.
He never does anything.

These sentences would be examples of realized multiple negation if the indefinite anything were changed to nothing in each case. For the various social classes, Wolfram found the following mean percentages of realized multiple negation: UMW, 1.2; UMW, 8.2; LMW, 12.3; UWW, 54.7; LWW, 77.8. These figures show sharp stratification between the middle classes, which had multiple negation relatively infrequently, and the working classes, which had multiple negatin in more than half of its possible occurrences (Negro DET:156). here were 7 informants (all preadolescents or adolescents) who showed

categorical multiple negation.[26] Conversely, 11 of 12 upper middle class white informants, 8 of 12 upper middle class Negroes, and 7 of 12 lower middle class Negroes did not use multiple negation at all (p. 157).

One of Wolfram's interesting observations (p. 158) concerns the occurrence of a negative adverb with a negative auxiliary or with another negative adverb. Multiple negation of this sort does not show such sharp social stratification as other types. Wolfram therefore concludes that a construction like The kids don't hardly come home or The kids hardly never come home would be less socially stigmatized than a construction like The kids don't do nothing or He didn't carry no knife.

Although the reading passage used in Wolfram's study contained several instances of potential multiple negation, no multiple negation occurred when the passages were read (p. 162).

Wolfram's data (p. 163) on age stratification of multiple negation is presented in Table 34.

Table 34. Percentage of Realized Multiple Negation: By Age

	10-12	14-17	Adults
UMN	13.6	11.0	0.0
LMN	34.7	1.6	0.9
UWN	57.8	72.7	33.7
LWN	90.2	77.3	65.8

[26] These informants had categorical multiple negation in what Wolfram calls the "restricted count" (Negro DET:157). This tabulation excluded the indefinite determiner a (He didn't have a knife) because Labov had observed (in Negro NTC:278, 280) that a does not operate under the same kind of categorical rule as other indefinites.

The adults consistently had less multiple negation than the youth, and in three of the four classes the adolescents had less multiple negation than the preadolescents. The lower middle class preadolescents had a much higher percentage of multiple negation (34.7%) than either the adolescents (1.6%) or the adults (0.9%). In fact, only one lower middle class adult used multiple negation, and no upper middle class adult realized a single negative element more than once in a sentence (Negro DET:163).

The males and females in Wolfram's study showed definite differences in the use of multiple negation. Wolfram's data (p. 162) is given in Table 35.

Table 35. Percentage of Realized Multiple Negation: By Sex

	Male	Female
UMN	10.4	6.0
LMN	22.3	2.4
UWN	68.2	41.2
LWN	81.3	74.3

The sharpest difference here is between the lower middle class males and females: the males realized multiple negation in 22.3% of its potential occurrences, whereas the females realized multiple negation only 2.4% of the time (this statistic for the females is surprising, since upper middle class females had 6.0% realized multiple negation). Also, 5 of the 7 working class preadolescents who showed categorical multiple negation were males. Conversely, only 6 of the 15 middle class informants who had a complete absence of multiple negation were males (Negro DET:162).

Sociolinguistic conclusions about multiple negation

Socioeconomic status. Wolfram found sharp stratification between the middle classes and the working classes; the latter used multiple negation much more frequently. Also, nearly all of the upper middle class whites and about three-fourths of the middle class Negroes showed no instances of multiple negation, whereas no working class informants showed the categorical absence of multiple negation. Conversely, a little less than a third of the working class informants categorically used multiple negation, whereas no middle class informant did (Negro DET:15').

Ethnic background. There are at least two kinds of multiple negative constructions used by NNE speakers but not used by nonstandard-speaking whites. These two types are: 1) negative inversion, in which the reversal of tense marker and subject characteristic of questions occurs in declarative sentences (Didn't nobody know it); and 2) extension of a negative element from one clause to a pre-verbal auxiliary in a following clause (Well, wasn't much I couldn't do). Labov found in his study that whereas the Negro peer groups extended a single underlying negative to all indefinites within a clause nearly 100% of the time in careful speech as well as casual speech, the white Inwood groups did so only 80% of the time (only careful speech elicited). Among the upper middle class informants in Wolfram's study, multiple negation was used 1.2% of the time by the whites and 8.2% of the time by the Negroes.

Style. For the Negro peer groups in Labov's study, multiple negation occurred almost categorically in both casual speech and

careful speech. Wolfram found no instances of multiple negation in reading style, though the reading passage did contain several instances of potential multiple negation.

Age. In Wolfram's study, the adults used multiple negation less often than the youth, and the adolescents generally used multiple negation less often than the preadolescents.

Sex. The males in Wolfram's study definitely used multiple negation more often than the females. The difference was greatest for the lower middle class: the males had 22.3% multiple negation, the females 2.4%.

2.8 SOME GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT PHONOLOGICAL AND GRAMMATICAL VARIABLES

Wolfram draws certain conclusions about the phonological and grammatical variables in his Negro DET study, conclusions which are valid for the present study as well since he studied all of the variables discussed here except (ing), which followed the general pattern for phonological variables.

Wolfram uses the terms "quantitative difference" and "qualitative difference" in comparing phonological and grammatical variables. Both kinds of differences can be illustrated by referring to two nonstandard pronunciations of the final consonant in with. The upper middle class whites and all the Negro groups Wolfram studied showed at least some use of [t] in with. Thus with respect to the [t] variant, the differences between the social classes were entirely quantitative: all groups used the variant, and the social groups were differentiated simply on the basis of the relative frequency of this [t] variant. But for the [f] variant of the final consonant in with, there was a

qualitative difference: one group (the upper middle class whites) showed a categorical absence of this [f] variant which was used by all the other groups. Among the Negro groups alone, the differences were quantitative (Negro DET:84-6).

Wolfram notes that there are some qualitative differences for phonological variables, particularly as one breaks down the variables according to relevant phonological environments. He concludes, however, that phonological variables generally tend to show quantitative differences rather than qualitative (Negro DET:217).

Although phonological variables tend to show mostly quantitative differences, grammatical variables often show qualitative or at least semi-qualitative differences. For example, Wolfram found that unlike adult Negro speakers of other classes, upper middle class Negro adults showed no absence of the possessive inflection, showed almost no absence of the third singular inflection, and showed almost no use of invariant be. There are qualitative ethnic differences, too: unlike the Negro youth, the white Inwood youth 1) showed no absence of the possessive or the third singular inflection; 2) showed no absence of is or are; 3) showed no use of habituative be; and 4) showed no use of three types of multiple negative constructions used by some Negro youths in Detroit and New York C[illegible]

In addition to noting that phonological st[illegible]cation tends to be quantitative whereas grammatical stratification tends to be qualitative as well as quantitative, Wolfram points out that whereas phonological variables usually show gradient stratification, grammatical variables often show sharp stratification (Negro DET:217).

Further, Wolfram theorizes that "the sharper the stratification of a particular variable, the more diagnostic its function as a linguistic marker of social class" (p. 121). Thus grammatical variables tend to be more socially diagnostic than phonological variables.

2.9 SOME SOCIOLINGUISTIC GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT THE VARIABLES DISCUSSED

Concerning socioeconomic stratification in general, Wolfram observes that the clearest linguistic boundary is between the lower middle class and the upper working class; the least clear-cut differences are between the upper and lower working classes (Negro DET:214).

As for stylistic differences, usually the more formal the style, the more closely one's speech approximates Standard English with respect to the variable in question. The working classes generally show more stylistic variation than the middle classes (particularly the upper middle class). This difference is not surprising, since the working classes generally have a higher percentage of stigmatized variants in their casual speech. Such style shifting indicates that the informants realize, unconsciously if not consciously, that the particular variable so stratified is a marker of social status.

Generally, adults use socially stigmatized variants less than adolescents and preadolescents do. According to Wolfram (Negro DET:205), this difference is considerably greater for the grammatical variables than for the phonological variables. Labov's data certainly seems to support this conclusion, yet he does comment that the most important linguistic shift from adolescence to adulthood is,

for Negro ghetto peer groups, a rise in the importance of phonological constraints such as the influence of a following vowel (Negro NYC:185); on the other hand, such phonological constraints are relevant to some grammatical variables as well as to phonological variables, so this observation does not necessarily contradict Wolfram's conclusion. Although one might assume that adolescents would use stigmatized variants less often than preadolescents, this is not always so. As both Labov and Wolfram agree, the high frequency of nonstandard variants among adolescent youth is due mainly to their explicit rejection of adult linguistic norms.

Females generally approximate Standard English norms more than males do. Labov says (1969d:33) that the crucial difference seems to be in the steeper slope of style shifting for women: "in all but the lowest status group they may actually use more of a nonstandard form in their casual speech than men, but in formal styles they shift more rapidly and show an excess of hypercorrect behavior at that end of the scale."

2.10 THE NATURE OF NNE

2.10.1 NNE Compared with SE and with White Nonstandard Speech

It is sometimes assumed that what Labov and Wolfram call style shifting is actually "code-switching"; that is, a speaker who almost categorically uses a nonstandard variant of a given variable in one style but almost categorically uses the standard variant in a more formal style is assumed to be switching from NNE to Standard English. Both Labov and Wolfram reject the idea that this shift is code-switching;

rather, it indicates inherent variability within a given speaker's linguistic system.

If there is no full-blown code switching, however, there does seem to be some borrowing on the part of NNE speakers, a certain amount of dialect mixture. The third singular verb inflection, for example, sometimes does occur in the speech of the youth here characterized as NNE speakers. However, the erratic use of this inflection in contexts where SE would not have it suggests that this grammatical feature has not been regularly incorporated into the NNE system (Negro DET:46). The lack of any regular stylistic shift among the Negro peer groups for the (Z_v) variable also suggests that this inflection is an importation from SE.

Thus contrary to what one might suppose, style shifting does not necessarily indicate dialect mixture, and in fact the converse seems to be true: dialect mixture is apparently signalled partly by the failure to shift from a preponderance of nonstandard variants to a lesser percentage of nonstandard variants as the social context becomes more formal. But inherent variability, not dialect mixture, is the rule.

Labov's conclusions about the status of NNE are worth quoting and paraphrasing extensively. He writes (Negro NYC:335): "To say that there is no single relation between NNE and SE is to assert that NNE is not simply a reduced form of SE, nor a generalized form, nor a Creolized form. It is not simply Southern regional English,[27] nor is

---

[27]Labov does point out (Negro NYC:4), however, that many NNE features are quite general in Southern speech, both nonstandard and

it a language independent of SE, which no one but native speakers can understand."

The main difference between NNE and SE is that NNE extends or generalizes SE rules. For example, in NNE an underlying / r / is sometimes deleted from phonological environments which do not allow / r / deletion in SE or in white nonstandard speech, and the deletion of / t / and / d / from monomorphemic and bimorphemic consonant clusters occurs far more frequently among NNE speakers than among SE or white nonstandard speakers.[28] Also, the NNE deletion of *are* and *is* seems to be an extension of SE contraction, an extension which is not made by white nonstandard speakers. And NNE speakers use multiple negation much more frequently than either SE speakers or white nonstandard speakers (Negro NYC:338).

Another difference between NNE and SE is that NNE lacks certain SE elements, elements used by white nonstandard speakers as well as by standard speakers. For instance, the possessive and the third singular inflections seem to have a tenuous place in NNE. Also, the complementizers *if* and *whether* are missing from NNE (Negro NYC:341).

---

standard. And the majority of the nonstandard phonological and grammatical variants discussed here apparently are found among white Southern speakers as well as among Negroes. Linguists so far do not have enough data on Southern speakers to state precisely the relation between NNE and Southern speech, either standard or nonstandard, white or Negro. We need more studies similar to the Lexington, Mississippi study undertaken by Shuy, Fasold, and Wolfram (this study is discussed on p. 65 here; see also Wolfram 1969a).

[28] Labov's discussion mentions only differences between NNE and SE, not differences between NNE and white nonstandard speech. In this and the next two paragraphs, the comparisons between NNE speech and white nonstandard speech are my own, based on Labov's data for the white nonstandard-speaking lowest groups.

A third difference is that NNE has some features which are not part of the SE system. These include certain types of multiple negation, invariant be, the copula deletion rule which extends SE contraction, and various Southern English features (Negro NYC:342). Again, NNE speakers differ in most of these respects from white nonstandard speakers: the latter do not use habituative be or the deletion rule, and they do not use certain types of multiple negation used by NNE speakers.

As the foregoing discussion has shown, NNE differs both quantitatively and qualitatively from Standard English and from the nonstandard speech of whites.

2.10.2 NNE as the Most Nonstandard Variety of Negro Nonstandard Speech

There are several sociolinguistic differences among Negro nonstandard speakers. The speech of Negro working class adults, for example, is in many respects decidedly more nonstandard than the speech of middle class Negro adults. Also there are age differences. Though in the Negro NYC study there seemed to be no general linguistic break between the preadolescent Thunderbirds, the adolescent groups, and the older Oscar Brothers, there still were some decided differences: for instance, the use of habituative be and of ain't for didn't increased with age until late adolescence; adults, however, rarely used these nonstandard features (Negro NYC:257). There were other definite differences, too, between the Negro youth and the adults in Labov's study. Even the working class adults did not preserve NNE uniformly: they seemed to have stable possessive and third singular inflections, for instance, and they showed copula deletion

much less frequently than the youth. Also, there were in the Negro NYC study some definite linguistic differences between the lames and the club members. For example, the lames clearly were closer quantitatively to SE with respect to the (ing) variable, the deletion of / r / when the following word began with a vowel, the deletion of is, and multiple negation.

All of these kinds of sociolinguistic differences among Negro nonstandard speakers, plus the style-correlated and sex-correlated differences, serve to characterize NNE as the casual speech of preadolescent and adolescent Negro males who belong to gangs in Northern ghetto areas.[29] NNE is by definition the most nonstandard variety of Negro nonstandard speech.

2.11 STATISTICAL GENERALIZATIONS

This section offers statistical generalizations which may be useful in determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Northern urban Negro speech.[30]

---

[29] Labov notes that exploratory work in Detroit, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles shows that the structure of NNE described in his Negro NYC study is essentially the structure of the language of preadolescent and adolescent youth in other Northern ghetto areas. The few differences found are generally regional differences characteristic also of the surrounding white community (Labov, Copula:50), or differences due to the differing Southern geographic origins of the Negro populations in the various ghetto areas (Negro DET:24).

[30] For a thorough and excellent non-statistical discussion of the nonstandard features currently found in Negro nonstandard speech, consult Fasold and Wolfram, "Some Linguistic Features of Negro Dialect," in Teaching Standard English in the Inner City, ed. Ralph W. Fasold and Roger W. Shuy, 41-86, Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970.

Whenever possible, Labov's Negro NYC data is given rather than Wolfram's Negro DET data. There are two reasons for this: 1) only Labov specifically studied the speech of preadolescent and adolescent Negro gangs, and much recent literature about Negroes depicts members of such gangs; 2) only Labov elicited casual style, which is the style most often represented in literature. Although the following statistical generalizations are based almost entirely on data from only New York City, the structure of NNE as described by Labov seems to be essentially the structure of the language of Negro youth from other Northern urban ghettos (Labov 1969a:p. 50 of the ERIC document).[31]

The following are my statistical generalizations for the eleven variables discussed:

1. One pronunciation usually considered nonstandard is the use of [in] rather than [iŋ] in the -ing endings which form present participles and verbal nouns like going and standing; the [in] pronunciation may also be used in words like nothing and something, in which the -ing is ordinarily unstressed. Spellings such as standin', standin, and standen all might be used in dialect literature to indicate the [in] pronunciation. Actually, speakers of Standard

---

[31] The percentages given here generally are rough averages of the statistics in each of Labov's classifications. However, averaging Labov's statistics in this way will not necessarily produce a mean percentage which accurately reflects Labov's raw data. In some cases Labov does not state how many instances each of his percentages is based on, so one sometimes has no way of knowing whether an average of the statistics Labov does give will in fact be an accurate reflection of the data he originally compiled.

English sometimes use this [in] pronunciation in both their casual speech and their careful speech, but they use it much less often than people who do not speak Standard English (Social Stratification: 398). Nonstandard speakers generally use the [in] pronunciation with some frequency in careful speech as well as in casual speech. NNE speakers (preadolescent and adolescent Negro males who belong to gangs in Northern ghettos) use [in] about 95% of the time or more in both casual and careful speech. The [in] pronunciation is used about 98% of the time in careful speech and presumably in casual speech also by preadolescent and adolescent white gangs in Northern ghettos (for convenience, these youth will be termed WNE speakers--speakers of a highly nonstandard variety of white nonstandard English). In careful speech, middle class Negro adults and upper working class Negro adults from the North use [in] about 34% of the time, whereas lower working class Negro adults of Northern origin and working class Negro adults who have come to the North from the South use [in] 85% of the time. In casual speech, middle class Negro adults use [in] even more often than working class adults; in careful speech, though, these middle class adults are much closer to the prestige norm than most Negro working class adults (Negro NYC:122; p. 31 here).

2. There are also nonstandard variants which occur instead of the unvoiced th in words like nothing and breath. Initial th (thin, thrust) is usually given the Standard English pronunciation, even by Negro speakers of the working class. What would be in Standard English a medial unvoiced th (nothing, ether) or a final unvoiced th (with, breath) is sometimes pronounced as unvoiced th, sometimes

pronounced as [f], sometimes pronounced as [t], and sometimes not pronounced at all. Upper and lower working class Negro youth use these nonstandard variants about 75% of the time, whereas working class Negro adults use them about 46% of the time. Middle class Negro preadolescents use the nonstandard variants about 25% of the time, whereas middle class Negro adolescents and adults use them about 10% of the time. Lower middle class Negroes and working class Negroes use the [f] variant about twice as often as the [t] variant; they only rarely show no consonant at all for standard unvoiced th. The [t] pronunciation and the absence of a consonant almost never occur except in the items with and nothing. For with, [t] is used about 70% of the time by working class Negroes and about 24% of the time by middle class Negroes. For nothing, [t] is used about 32% of the time by working class Negroes and about 9% of the time by middle class Negroes. Only lower working class Negroes have more than about 5% consonant absence for either with or nothing; these speakers pronounce with without a final consonant about 6% of the time and nothing without a medial consonant about 26% of the time (Negro DET:84-8, 93; pp. 37-8 here).

3. Another nonstandard feature is the omission of [r] from various phonological contexts.

a. r-less areas

For r-less areas, the omission of [r] is of course not always nonstandard. In casual speech, preconsonantal r within a word (cart, bark) and r occurring finally before a word beginning with a consonant (car was) are almost always pronounced as a vowel by

Negro speakers and by all white speakers except those of the upper middle class. But when the next word begins with a vowel (car is), white speakers usually pronounce the r as a consonant. In r-less areas the major difference between white and Negro pronunciation of r occurs when a final r is followed by a word beginning with a vowel. As noted, white speakers usually pronounce the r as a consonant in this position. But in both casual and careful styles, NNE speakers do not pronounce final r as a consonant about 95% of the time when the following word begins with a vowel. In contrast, WNE speakers fail to pronour ce r as a consonant only about 5% of the time in casual speech and about 20% of the time in careful speech, when the following word begins with a vowel. Working class Negro adults do not pronounce final r as a consonant before a word beginning with a vowel about 80% of the time in casual speech; upper working class Negro adults do not pronounce final pre-vocalic r as a consonant about 60% of the time in careful speech, whereas lower working class Negro adults fail to pronounce such r's as a consonant about 90% of the time in careful speech. Middle class Negro adults do not pronounce final pre-vocalic r as a consonant about 50% of the time in casual speech, about 20% of the time in careful speech (Negro NYC:99-100, 102; pp. 41-2 here).

b. r-pronouncing areas

In r-pronouncing areas, white speakers usually pronounce all r's. Working class Negroes in urban r-pronouncing areas fail to pronounce r as a consonant about 20% less often than Negroes of similar social status in r-less areas; middle class Negroes in r-pronouncing areas

fail to pronounce r as a consonant about 35% less often than their counterparts in r-less areas (my generalization, based on Negro NYC:99-100, 102, and Negro DET:114; pp. 43-4 here).

4. Another nonstandard feature is the absence of final [t] or [d] from words in which the [t] or [d] would not represent past tense or past participle (mis for mist, ban for band). The absence of final [t] and [d] is higher when the following word begins with a consonant than when the following word begins with a vowel. When a consonant follows, NNE speakers omit final [t] and [d] not representing past tense or past participle about 95% of the time or more in both casual and careful style. When a vowel follows, NNE speakers omit these final [t]'s and [d]'s about 50% of the time in casual style and about 65% of the time in careful style. In casual style, WNE speakers have about 67% absence when a consonant follows and 9% when a vowel follows. Working class Negro adults in their casual and careful speech omit these final [t]'s and [d]'s about 88% of the time when a consonant follows and about 51% of the time when a vowel follows. Middle class adults in casual and careful speech omit these [t]'s and [d]'s about 70% of the time when a consonant follows and 30% of the time when a vowel follows (Negro NYC:128, 149; pp. 50-2 here).

5. Another nonstandard feature is the absence of final [t] or [d] indicating past tense or past participle (miss for missed, ban for banned).[32] In casual speech, NNE speakers do not pronounce these

---

[32]Neither Labov nor Wolfram investigated the absence of [id] representing past tense or past participle (as in wait for waited). Fasold and Wolfram (1970:59) note that this [id] suffix is rarely

[t]'s and [d]'s about 85% of the time when the following word begins with a consonant; when the following word begins with a vowel, NNE speakers do not pronounce past tense and past participle [t]'s and [d]'s about 13% of the time. In careful speech, the figures for NNE speakers are about 70% absence before a following consonant and about 20% absence before a following vowel. WNE speakers have a much lower percentage of absence in casual style than NNE speakers have: WNE speakers have about 14% absence when a consonant follows and 4% absence when a vowel follows. Like the youth, Negro adults show some stylistic variation in the use of past tense and past participle [t]'s and [d]'s; however, adults' stylistic variation is generally not as great. For casual style and careful style taken together, working class Negro adults have about 54% absence of these [t]'s and [d]'s before a consonant and about 20% absence before a vowel; middle class Negro adults have about 25% absence before a consonant and 2% absence before a vowel (Negro NYC:128, 149; pp. 50-2 here).

6. One nonstandard grammatical feature is the absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing noun plural (as in cart for carts, car for cars, box for boxes). For most Negro speakers, these inflections are absent no more than 15% of the time under any grammatical or stylistic circumstance. Often the percentages are considerably lower, between 0% and 6%. Negro middle class adults show 0% or close to 0% absence of these inflections. (Negro NYC:161-2; Negro DET:145, 150; pp. 68-9 here.)

---

absent from Negro speech.

7. Another nonstandard grammatical feature is the absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing noun possessive (cart for cart's, car for car's, box for box's).

In New York City, NNE speakers have about 72% absence of possessive [s] and [z] in casual style and about 54% absence in careful style. Negro adults show the absence of possessive [s] and [z] much less frequently; this is particularly true of middle class Negro adults, who very rarely if ever omit these inflectional endings (Negro NYC:171; p. 71 here).

In Detroit, lower working class Negro preadolescents have about 45% absence of possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz], and lower working class Negro adolescents have about 20% absence. Adult Negro working class speakers have about 16% absence of these endings. Lower middle class Negroes of all ages have under 8% absence of possessive [s], [z], and [ɨz], and upper middle class Negroes show no absence at all. The percentages are all for careful style (Negro DET:150, 146; p. 72 here).

NNE speakers from New York City apparently pronounce the regular noun possessive endings less frequently than lower working class Negro youths from Detroit. (See p. 74 here or Negro DET:141 for an explanation of this difference.)

8. Another nonstandard grammatical feature is the absence of [s], [z], or [ɨz] representing third singular present tense (she walk, drive, miss for she walks, drives, misses).

a. Verbs following the regular third singular pattern

In casual and careful styles, NNE speakers have on the average about 70% absence of the third singular inflection. WNE speakers show no

absence of this inflection, and middle class Negro adults show little or no absence (Negro NYC:161; Negro DET:150; p. 76 here).

In New York City, working class Negro adults in casual and careful style generally have about 20% absence of third singular [s] and [z] when the next word begins with a consonant; when the next word begins with a vowel, working class Negro adults of Northern origin show 0% absence whereas working class Negro adults of Southern origin have a range of 20% to 82% absence (Negro NYC:161-2; p. 76 here). In Detroit, adult working class Negroes (some of Northern origin and some of Southern) have about 54% absence of third singular [s], [z], and [ɨz], for careful style and reading style taken together (Negro DET:150; p. 77 here).

b. Verbs with irregular third singular forms

NNE speakers generally have standard person-number agreement for am, is, and are. The form I are does not occur at all. I is and I plus no copula occur well below 1% of the time. In third singular present contexts, either is occurs or there is no copula at all. Is occurs for are 5% of the time or less (Negro NYC:221; p. 78 here).

NNE speakers use have for has about 81% of the time. They use do for does, don't for doesn't, and say for says nearly 100% of the time. WNE speakers, on the other hand, follow Standard English usage for these verbs except that they use don't about two-thirds of the time instead of doesn't. Some working class Negro adults follow the standard pattern for these verbs and some do not. Middle class Negro adults follow the Standard English pattern (Negro NYC:249; p. 80 here.

NNE speakers use was in place of were about 86% of the time (Negro NYC:249; p. 80 here).

9. Another nonstandard grammatical feature is the absence of the present tense copula forms is and are; a related feature is the use of is in contexts where Standard English would require am or are.

NNE speakers almost always contract I am to I'm; the 'm, however, is absent rarely if at all (Negro NYC:178; p. 84 here).

In contrast to am, the copula form is frequently does not occur in NNE speech in contexts where Standard English would require is. The preceding grammatical environment makes a considerable difference in the percentage of absence. When a pronoun precedes the copula position, NNE speakers show about 61% absence of is in casual and careful speech; when some other kind of noun phrase precedes the copula position, NNE speakers have about 34% absence in casual speech and about 16% absence in careful speech. The grammatical environment following the copula position also makes a difference in the percentage of is absence: absence is highest when the form gonna follows, next highest when a present participle follows. NNE speakers show about 91% is absence before gonna and about 71% absence before a present participle. WNE speakers show no absence whatsoever of is. When a pronoun precedes the copula position, working class Negro adults show about 27% absence of is in casual style, 16% in careful style; is is absent about half as often when some other kind of noun phrase precedes the copula position. Middle class Negro adults show no absence of is at all (Negro NYC:194-5; pp. 86-7, 89 here).

NNE speakers rarely reduce that's, what's, and it's to simply that, what, and it. The usual NNE pronunciations of standard that's, what's, and it's can best be represented by the spellings thas, whas, and iss, all of which are pronounced with a final [s] (Negro NYC:180; p. 84 here).

Are absence is even greater than is absence for most Negro youth and adults. NNE speakers show are absence about 82% of the time, overall; are is absent about 86% of the time before present participles and 93% of the time before gonna. Apparently working class Negro adults show about 60% absence of are in casual style; for upper working class speakers this drops to about 14% in careful style, but lower working class speakers show little style shift. Middle class Negro adults do not show any absence of are (Negro NYC:219, 241; pp. 88-9 here).

NNE speakers use is in am contexts less than 1% of the time; they use is in are contexts 5% of the time or less (Negro NYC:221; p. 78 here).

10. Another nonstandard grammatical feature is the use of the uninflected form be in contexts which would require am, is, or are in Standard English. This use of uninflected be usually indicates actions which are habitual or iterative or indicates a general condition or state of affairs lasting over a period of time (when you don't be talking about someone else all the time; I never be in the fights). NNE speakers seldom use this uninflected "habituative" be in casual speech, but in careful speech they use uninflected be about 34% of the time in contexts where Standard English would require

are; about 14% of the time in am contexts; and about 9% of the time in is contexts. WNE speakers do not use uninflected be at all in am, is, or are contexts, and Negro adults only rarely show this use of uninflected be (Negro NYC:234-5; p. 103 here).

11. Multiple negation is still another nonstandard grammatical feature. Even standard speakers sometimes use such "double negatives" as can't hardly and hardly never, in which a negative adverb is combined with a negative auxiliary or with another negative adverb. In nonstandard speech, some persons use other types of double negatives (he didn't do no work, he ain't got none) but do not always negate all indefinites in a clause: they may say he ain't never done anything wrong rather than he ain't never done nothing wrong. In casual and careful styles, NNE speakers extend negative concord to all indefinites in a clause about 98% of the time. WNE speakers extend negative concord to all indefinites in a clause about 80% of the time in careful speech (Negro NYC:277, 279; pp. 107-8 here). Lower working class Negro adults show about 66% negative concord, and upper working class Negro adults show about 34%. Middle class Negro adults almost never extend negative concord to all indefinites in a clause (Negro DET:163; p. 109 here).

Naturally a literary critic is not likely to need all of this data to determine the accuracy of the representation of Negro nonstandard speech in any one literary work. On the other hand, the critic will probably find these statistics sufficient for determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Northern urban

Negro nonstandard speech, speech of about the last twenty-five years.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS OF THE LITERARY REPRESENTATION OF NEGRO NONSTANDARD DIALECT IN THREE BOOKS

This chapter discusses the accuracy of the representation of Negro nonstandard dialect in Shane Stevens' Go Down Dead (William Morrow and Company, 1966), Warren Miller's The Cool World (Fawcett, 1959), and Claude Brown's Manchild in the Promised Land (New American Library, 1965). These three books were chosen because in each book the representation of Negro nonstandard dialect is extensive enough to permit at least some investigation of sociolinguistic differences: how the characters' use of nonstandard variants differs with socio-economic status, ethnic background, speech context (some situations elicit a more casual style than others), age, and sex. Furthermore, the Negro nonstandard speech the authors attempted to represent is Northern urban speech (New York City speech) of the past five to twenty-five years. It was important that the speech represented be Northern urban speech, since so far the sociolinguists have completed detailed descriptions of only that Negro speech which is used in certain Northern urban areas. It was also important that the speech represented be relatively recent speech, because the detailed sociolinguistic studies of Negro speech have all been made since 1965.

Whenever possible, this analysis utilizes the data from Volume 1 of Labov's A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto

Rican Speakers in New York City (abbreviated Negro NYC) rather than the data from Walter Wolfram's A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech (abbreviated Negro DET). Labov's data is used in preference to Wolfram's because only Labov specifically studied the speech of Negro gangs like those in the books to be analyzed; because only Labov elicited casual style, which is the style most frequently represented in these books; and because the setting for all three of the books is New York City, where Labov's investigation was made.

To determine the accuracy of the representation of Negro nonstandard dialect in each book, I first found out, so far as possible, what percentage of the time each major character uses the nonstandard variant (or variants) of each of the variables discussed in Chapter 2. The present chapter presents my percentages along with the comparable percentages from Labov (or Wolfram). When the percentages seem reasonably close (obviously this is a subjective evaluation), the dialect representation is considered "accurate"; otherwise it is judged as more or less inaccurate. One must remember, of course, that Labov's percentages are rough statistical averages and that they may represent rather wide individual variation. Bearing this in mind, I have nevertheless operated on the assumption that for each character, the percentages of nonstandard variants should come reasonably close to the comparable average percentages Labov gives, if the dialect representation is to be judged as accurate. This statistical method of criticism is most relevant in discussing the accuracy of the representation of particular variables. If, for instance, most of the major characters in a book use the nonstandard

variant of a given variable much more often than Labov's average percentages suggest real people of similar social backgrounds would use the nonstandard variant, then the author's representation of that variable can be said to be inaccurate.

3.1 GO DOWN DEAD

3.1.1 Plot Synopsis

Go Down Dead is narrated by its protagonist, Adam Clayton Henry--better known as King. King is the 16-year-old leader of the Playboys, a black Harlem gang whose chief enemy is a white gang, the Tigers. The book describes a week in the life of King and his friends and enemies, a week characterized by events which would shock the sensibilities of many middle class whites: King is determined to get some dynamite to blow up the Tigers, and he earns this dynamite by performing in stag movies; he and another gang member take a taxi to the Tigers' territory and shoot one of them; the Tigers dump in front of the Playboys' clubhouse a girl who "belongs" to the Playboys and whom the Tigers have raped, mutilated, and nearly killed. These and other similarly disturbing events, commonplace for the Playboys and the Tigers, culminate in a "rumble," a gang fight arranged for in advance by representatives of both gangs.

3.1.2 Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed

I analyzed in some detail the representation of the nonstandard dialect features of the narrator (King) and of several characters and groups of characters in Go Down Dead. Only the longer of the narrative passages were analyzed: pages 73-78; 138-141; 164-167;

173-181; 210-213; 232-236. For analyzing the dialect of the narrator, only the first 50 variants were tabulated for most of the variables, regardless of whether there were more than 50 variants in the corpus. Table 36 lists the characters whose speech was analyzed and gives in most cases the pages where the analyzed speech is to be found. The entire corpus of each of these characters and groups of characters was analyzed.

Table 36. Go Down Dead Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed

Character	Page Numbers of Corpus
King	passim
Playboys (excluding King)[1]	passim
King's mother	52-5; 71; 85-86; 120-121; 224-225
Mr. Johnson	214-218
The Dealer	108-112; 146-148; 172-173
Morris	142-144; 182-184; 187; 189-190
Tigers	205-207; 230-231
Bill Turner	162; 167-170
Sandy Arizona	57; 65-69

[1] I have also excluded a gang member nicknamed Lil Abner because "He talk funny" (p. 18). Lil Abner's entire corpus is as follows: "'Be telling us King man we be waiting on you for the news'" (p. 18); "'Will you be telling us what he want for the fire?'" (p. 18); "'Are you be telling us we don't going try and get them for what they done?'" (p. 33); "'What be the meaning of the picture do you wonder?'" (p. 92); and "'King man it getting close on that time. Maybe we best be moving'" (p. 224). King accounts for the peculiarity of Lil Abner's speech by noting that "he come from somewhere down South in the mountains" (p. 18).

King and each of the Playboys are of course members of a black adolescent Harlem gang, the "Playboys." Therefore their speech should approximate that of the adolescent Jets and Cobras whose speech Labov describes in Negro NYC. Similarly, the speech of the white Tiger gang should approximate that of the white adolescent Inwood gang that Labov studied. King's mother scrubs floors in a hospital two days a week; presumably she would be classified as lower working class according to Labov's Negro NYC criteria. (Wolfram's lower working class and upper working class seem to be roughly equivalent to the classes with the same label in Labov's Negro NYC study.) Mr. Johnson is a Negro preacher, but presumably he is not an ordained minister: he has only a store-front church and he is clearly all too eager to take the money of the poor people who come to him for help and spiritual guidance (pp. 213, 216). Probably he too would be considered lower working class according to Labov's Negro NYC scheme, though it is possible he would be at the lower fringes of the upper working class (see my Chapter 2, pp. 23 and 26, for a discussion of Labov's social classifications). The Dealer is a supplier of drugs, an important man in Harlem. He would probably be classified as upper working class. Morris earns a good living making pornographic movies. King the narrator tells us that Morris is "Very polite"; "Morris do a lot of bizness with the white people that plain to see" (p. 142). Like the Dealer, Morris would probably be classified as upper working class according to Labov's Negro NYC scheme (but both would probably be considered lower middle class according to the method of classification Labov used in his earlier study, The Social Stratification of English in New York City; see p. 217 of that study, p. 23 here).

Bill Turner is a white seaman whom King visits occasionally; probably he would fit into the lower working class according to the Negro NYC criteria. Sandy Arizona is a white woman about 30 years old, King estimates; her social status is impossible to determine.

I am arbitrarily assuming that King the narrator has reported these characters' speech accurately, that we are shown their speech not just as perceived by King but also as Shane Stevens thinks it "really is." This assumption is perhaps dubious, but it must be made in order for my criticism to be valid. Otherwise any inaccuracies in dialect representation might be attributed to King's possibly faulty hearing, and Shane Stevens could no longer be held responsible.

3.1.3 Styles Analyzed

King the narrator is of course not using a speaking style at all but rather a highly informal writing style, a style which nevertheless proves to be very much like King's speaking style. Though occasionally King talks to adults with whom he might be expected to use a relatively formal style (in particular, the Dealer and Mr. Johnson), most of the conversation in Go Down Dead is between the various members of the Playboys, including of course King. That is, most of the speech situations would be expected to elicit the "casual" style described in Labov's Social Stratification study or the "group" style of his Negro NYC youth. It seems that the latter style would be somewhat less formal than the former, since the persons whose speech was recorded were not talking directly to the interviewer, as they often were when using the "casual" style described in the SS study; however, Labov labels both of these styles as Style A and apparently

considers them roughly equivalent. Therefore both styles will be referred to here as "casual" style. Since most of the speech situations in Go Down Dead seem to be ones in which casual speech would be used, I did not try to distinguish between speaking styles in analyzing the various characters' speech; I simply considered all the speech as casual.

3.1.4 Validity of the Statistics Presented

It is a moot question how many instances of a given variable are needed to give significant results. In his SS study (p. 181), Labov says "we found that from 10 to 20 instances of a given variable were sufficient to assign a value that fits consistently into a complex matrix of stylistic variation, while at the level of three or four instances, fluctuation unrelated to the matrix was noted." This suggests that statistics based on fewer than ten instances of a given variable may be suspect, and that statistics based on fewer than five instances are very likely unreliable.

For most of the variables analyzed in the three books under discussion, I tabulated the number of standard variants, the number of nonstandard variants, and the total number of variants. I then determined what percentage of the time the nonstandard variant occurs. Since some of these percentages are based on fewer than ten variants, I call attention to the dubious validity of these particular statistics by placing one asterisk after percentages based on five through nine instances and by placing two asterisks after percentages based on fewer than five instances. It may seem more sensible to exclude such dubious statistics altogether, but they are included

because many of the dubious percentages suggest tendencies which might be confirmed if further data were available.

3.1.5 The Variables Analyzed

Careful preliminary reading of Go Down Dead revealed that it would not be profitable to tabulate the standard and nonstandard variants of all eleven of the variables discussed in Chapter 2, since for some variables the nonstandard variant occurs only rarely if at all. Present participles and other words ending in unstressed -ing are always written with -ing, never with just -in. The standard unvoiced th pronunciation is almost always and perhaps always indicated; I found, for example, no instances of wit or wif for standard with. Final -t's and -d's not representing past tense or past participle are almost always and perhaps always present. Since the r is almost always missing from your, yourself, their, and the expletive there (but not from the adverb there), the presence and absence of r in these words was tabulated.[2] For other words, however, I found only rare instances of r-absence: "nabahood," p. 161; "bastuds," p. 95; "nigguh," p. 90; and "draw" for "drawer," p. 216. Similarly, I found only rare instances of an uninflected noun which in Standard English would have a final -s to indicate its plurality: "'we got four piece pipe'" (Ribbons, p. 129); "'She been off almost two year'" (Tonto, p. 135). (In each of these cases, the noun is a noun of measure and is preceded by a plural quantifier. It is in such cases that NNE speakers are least likely to pronounce the plural

---

[2] Their and the expletive there are usually spelled they.

inflection.) I found only rare instances also of possessive nouns without a final -s: "'Keep you dog mouth shut too'" (King, p. 72); "'What is Kingfish middle name?'" (King, p. 96).

Since nonstandard variants of six of the eleven variables discussed in Chapter 2 occur only rarely if at all, just the following were tabulated:

1. the presence or absence of r in your, yourself, their, and the expletive there;

2. the presence or absence of -ed indicating past tense or past participle;

3. the presence or absence of -s indicating verb third singular present tense;

4. present tense copula forms:

   a. the presence or absence of is in third singular contexts;

   b. the presence of are, the presence of is, and the total absence of a copula in contexts where Standard English would require are;

   c. the presence of am, the presence of is, and the total absence of a copula in contexts where Standard English would require am;

   d. the presence of thas and that where Standard English would require that's or that is (tabulated for the narrator only);

5. the occurrences of invariant be;

6. the extension or non-extension of negative concord to all indefinites within a clause.

Each of these variables will be discussed in detail.

3.1.5.1 The presence or absence of r in your, yourself, their, and the expletive there

Table 37 presents data for the presence and absence of r in your, yourself, their, and the expletive there. The first column gives the number of occurrences of your and the other forms in which r is present;

the second column gives the number of occurrences of the r-less forms; the third column gives the total of occurrences tabulated; and the last column shows what percent of the time the r-less variants occur.

Table 37. Absence of r from your, yourself, their, and the Expletive there

	r Present	r Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator	3	47	50	94
King	1	19	20	95
Playboys	1	15	16	94
King's mother	0	9	9	100*
Mr. Johnson	0	7	7	100*
The Dealer	0	13	13	100
Morris	5	5	10	50
Tigers	2	0	2	0**
Bill Turner	3	0	3	0**
Sandy Arizona	3	0	3	0**
All whites	8	0	8	0*

The narrator and all of the Negro characters except Morris use the r-less variants between 94% and 100% of the time. It is not surprising that Morris uses the r-less variants less often than the other Negro adults, since Morris has frequent contact with whites. The white characters whose speech I analyzed do not show any use of the r-less pronunciations at all, though admittedly the data is somewhat scarce. (In order to make a more valid generalization about the white characters' use of r in these words I combined under the heading "All whites" the data for the Tigers, for Bill Turner, and for Sandy Arizona.)

None of Labov's or Wolfram's data would be completely comparable to the data collected here, since their tabulations of r were not confined to only four words. Still, some observations can be made concerning Shane Stevens' accuracy in representing his characters'

pronunciation of your, yourself, their, and the expletive there.

Labov's Social Stratification study revealed that in casual speech, an r occurring before a consonant (in the same word or the next) almost always becomes a vowel in the speech of all white New Yorkers except those of the upper middle class (SS:239, p. 40 here). Therefore it is unrealistic for the Tigers and Bill and Sandy to pronounce the r in your and the other three words when the following morpheme or word begins with a consonant, as it does in 7 out of the 8 cases tabulated.

Labov found that in casual style preconsonantal [r] and final [r] before a word beginning with a consonant were absent 100% of the time for the Negro adolescent peer groups and were absent about 93% of the time for all the adults studied. In casual speech, final [r] before a word beginning with a vowel was absent about 95% of the time for the Negro adolescent peer groups and about 80% of the time for the working class adults (Negro NYC:102; p. 41 here). It is realistic, then, for Stevens to show his Negro youths as having about 95% absence of r. However, the 100% r-absence of most of Shane's Negro adults is probably slightly exaggerated. Morris is of course the exception; his 50% absence of r may in fact be somewhat low.

3.1.5.2 The presence or absence of -ed indicating past tense or past participle

What is here termed the "restricted count" included verbs whose past tense or past participle is regularly formed by the addition of [t] or [d]; what is termed the "full count" included also verbs whose past tense or past participle is regularly formed by the addition

of [id]. Since the [id] inflection is rarely absent in Negro dialect (Fasold and Wolfram 1970:59), such a full count should reveal a lower percentage of nonstandard variants than the restricted count, if the dialect representation is accurate.

The tabulation of past participle forms included past participles which occur in passive constructions (as in he was killed by the cops) and past participles which occur in perfective constructions, constructions in which the participle would be preceded by have, has, or had in Standard English (as in the cops have killed him). However, adjectivally-functioning words ending in -ed were excluded because it was often difficult to tell in the given context whether such words were derived from verb forms. Most of the -ed words tabulated are past participle forms rather than past tense forms, because the narrator and the characters in Go Down Dead usually use the historical present in describing past events.

The data for this variable is presented in Table 38.

The data in Table 38 shows that in each case the full count percentage is indeed lower than the restricted count percentage, as one would expect of an accurate dialect representation.

Occasionally my tabulating procedure was not as refined as Labov's. In the present case, for example, Labov studied the absence of past tense and past participle [t]'s and [d]'s only when these suffixes occurred or would have occurred as the final member of a consonant cluster, whereas I did not place such a restriction on the tabulation of -ed. A second difference between Labov's method and mine is that Labov took into account the phonological environment that

Table 38. Absence of -ed Indicating Past Tense or Past Participle

	-ed Present	-ed Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator				
Restricted count	1	36	37	97
Full count	4	40	44	91
King				
Restricted count	0	22	22	100
Full count	1	25	26	96
Playboys				
Restricted count	1	24	25	96
Full count	2	26	28	93
King's mother	0	0	0	--
Mr. Johnson[3]	0	4	4	100**
The Dealer[3]	0	4	4	100**
Morris	0	3	3	100**
Restricted count	0	2	2	100**
Full count	0	3	3	100**
Tigers[3]	3	0	3	0**
Bill Turner	0	0	0	--
Sandy Arizona	0	0	0	--

followed, whereas I did not. I did not always use tabulating procedures as refined as those of Labov because of the scarcity of the data for some of the literary characters. As it is, many of my percentages are probably based on inadequate data; in these instances, further limitation and differentiation would have been useless.

In his Negro NYC study, Labov found that for the white Inwood youths there was in group style a 14% absence of past tense and past participle [t]'s and [d]'s when a consonant followed and a 4% absence when a vowel followed (Negro NYC:149; p. 51 here).[4] Among Shane's

---

[3]In the speech of Mr. Johnson, the Dealer, and the Tigers, there were no verbs which regularly add [id] to form the past tense and past participle; hence there is a "restricted" count but no "full" count.

[4]Interestingly, Wolfram's upper middle class whites showed 36.2% absence of the past tense and past participle inflections when the

white characters there were only 3 past tense and past participle verbs; in each case a vowel followed and the -ed was present. Three instances are hardly conclusive, but at least with these instances Stevens does accurately suggest that his white characters would usually pronounce past tense and past participle suffixes.

Labov found that in casual conversation, the Negro adolescent peer groups showed past tense and past participle [t] and [d] absence about 85% of the time when the next word began with a consonant and about 13% of the time when the next word began with a vowel. The working class adults in casual conversation showed 60% absence in the former phonological environment, 22% in the latter (Negro NYC: 128, 149; p. 50 here). Clearly the 96% to 100% absence (restricted count) for all of Stevens' Negro characters is an exaggeration.

3.1.5.3 The presence or absence of -s indicating verb third singular present tense

This tabulation excluded the verbs which do not simply add [s], [z], or [ɨz] in the third singular: have, do, say, and of course the copula. The procedure used here was essentially the same as Wolfram's. Labov, however, placed further restrictions on his corpus: he did not tabulate the presence or absence of the [ɨz] ending, and he tabulated the [s] and [z] endings only when they occurred or would have occurred as the final member of a consonant cluster. Once again, Labov took into account the phonological environment which followed, whereas I--and Wolfram--did not.

The results of my tabulation are presented in Table 39.

---

following word began with a consonant (Negro DET:68; p. 54 here).

Table 39. Absence of -s Indicating Third Singular Present Tense

	-s Present	-s Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator	0	50	50	100
King	1	36	37	97
Playboys	0	45	45	100
King's mother	0	3	3	100**
Mr. Johnson	0	19	19	100
The Dealer	0	19	19	100
Morris	0	12	12	100
Tigers	1	1	2	50**
Bill Turner	10	0	10	0
Sandy Arizona	7	0	7	0*

Again the Negro characters show 100% or nearly 100% absence of the inflection under investigation, the third singular -s. The white adults, Bill Turner and Sandy Arizona, show 100% presence. Of course the data on the Tigers--only 2 instances--is too scarce to be conclusive, but it is interesting that they are between the Negro characters and the white adults in showing a 50% absence of third singular -s.

In his Negro NYC study, Labov found that in casual style the white Inwood groups always pronounced the third singular inflectional endings. The Negro adolescent peer groups showed about 70% absence of third singular [s] and [z]. The working class adult groups showed 0% to 33% absence in casual style, but in careful style the working class adults of Southern origin had noticeably higher percentages of absence: 23% to 82% (Negro NYC:161-2; p.76 here). For casual style and reading style taken together, Wolfram's lower working class Negro adults (some of Northern origin and some of Southern) showed 57.1% absence of the third singular inflection, and the upper working class adults showed 50.6% absence (Negro DET:150; p. 77 here).

Since Labov's white youths did not lose the third singular inflection at all, Stevens is presumably accurate in showing the white adults with no loss of this inflection. One cannot fairly judge the accuracy with which Stevens has represented the Tigers' use of this inflection on the basis of only 2 instances. On the other hand, the 100% or nearly 100% third singular -s absence for his Negro characters is clearly an exaggeration.

3.1.5.4 Present tense copula forms

Labov's tabulating procedure was essentially followed in analyzing present tense copula forms (see Negro NYC:190, 175, 218). First, the tabulation excluded contexts in which Standard English would require that's or that is, what's or what is, it's or it is; these contexts were considered separately. Second, the tabulation excluded environments in which a present or past tense copula is obligatorily present: in clause-final position (I know that's who he is), in tag questions (she's not here, is she?), and in sentences which emphasize the existence or non-existence of something (there is a God, there is no God). Third, questions were excluded. Labov does not explain why he excluded them, but it may be because in casual speech even SE speakers often omit the copula in questions such as you coming? and where you going?, questions in which you is the deep subject.

3.1.5.4.1 The presence or absence of is in third singular contexts

The tabulations for the presence and absence of is in Go Down Dead are given in Table 40.

Table 40. Absence of *is* from Third Singular Contexts

	is Present	*is* Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator	8	42	50	84
King	10	28	38	74
Playboys	7	27	34	79
King's mother	0	5	5	100*
Mr. Johnson	8	5	13	38
The Dealer	12	8	20	40
Morris	11	0	11	0
Tigers	3	0	3	0**
Bill Turner	5	0	5	0*
Sandy Arizona	3	0	3	0**
All whites	11	0	11	0

It seems somewhat odd that the narrator should have 5% to 10% more absence of *is* than King and the Playboys have in speech; one would expect King's writing style to be more nearly standard than his speaking style--at least one would not expect the reverse. Morris is more nearly standard in his use of *is* than are the other Negro adults, just as he was more nearly standard in his use of *r* in *your*, *yourself*, *their*, and the expletive *there*; Morris is in fact completely standard in his use of *is*. Even the Dealer and Mr. Johnson show only about 40% absence, whereas King's mother shows 100%. This difference is not too surprising, since she presumably is lower on the social scale than the three men. The whites all show 0% absence of *is*.

In his Negro NYC study, Labov found that the white Inwood groups did not show any absence of *is*. In casual style, the Negro peer groups omitted *is* about 61% of the time when a pronoun preceded the copula position and about 34% of the time when some other noun phrase preceded. For casual style, the adults had about 27% *is* absence in

the former environment, 14% in the latter (Negro NYC:194-5; p. 86 of this study).

Stevens is thus accurate in suggesting that his white characters never omit _is_. But he is decidedly inaccurate in portraying the Negro youths as having no _is_ 74% to 84% of the time, and he is rather inaccurate also in portraying the Dealer and Mr. Johnson as having no _is_ about 40% of the time.

3.1.5.4.2 The use of the copula in contexts requiring _are_ in Standard English

For this analysis, the variants tabulated were the presence of _are_, the presence of _is_, and the total absence of a copula in contexts which require _are_ in Standard English. This data is presented in Table 41.

Table 41. Use of the Copula in SE _are_ Contexts

	are Pres.	_is_ Pres.	Copula Absent	Total	Percent of _is_	Percent of Copula Absence	Total Percent of Non-standard Variants
Narrator	0	56	45	101	55	45	100
King	0	29	39	68	43	57	100
Playboys	0	9	17	26	35	65	100
King's mother	0	6	0	6	100*	0*	100*
Mr. Johnson	0	9	3	12	75	25	100
The Dealer	0	21	3	24	88	12	100
Morris	2	4	7	13	31	54	85
Tigers	1	0	1	2	0**	50**	50**
Bill Turner	3	0	0	3	0**	0**	0**
Sandy Arizona	1	0	0	1	0**	0**	0**

There are interesting differences between the Negro youths and most of the Negro adults in their use of the copula in contexts

requiring *are* in Standard English. Neither the Negro youths nor the adults use *are* (except for Morris, who has *are* in 2 out of 13 instances). However, the adolescent speakers have no copula at all more often than they have *is*, and the narrator uses *is* only 10% more often than no copula. In contrast, most of the Negro adults have *is* far more often than no copula at all. Morris is again the exception: he uses *is* over 20% less often than no copula, and his pattern on this point thus resembles the pattern of the Negro adolescents rather than the pattern of the other Negro adults. As usual the Tigers are the only whites who show any deviation from the standard norm: they use *are* once, omit it once.

Labov's data on p. 219 of Negro NYC (p. 88 here) shows that his Negro adolescent peer groups omitted *are* about 79% of the time. *Is* was used for *are* 5% of the time or less (Negro NYC:221; p. 78 here). Thus the Negro adolescents in Labov's study used nonstandard variants a total of about 84% of the time in contexts where *are* would be required in Standard English. The working class adults omitted *are* about 60% of the time in casual style. The Inwood whites did not delete *are* (Negro NYC:241; pp. 88 and 91 here).

The percentages of *are* absence are low for all Stevens' Negro characters. But since Labov's Negro adolescents used nonstandard forms about 84% of the time and Stevens' Negro adolescents and adults (with the exception of Morris) use nonstandard forms 100% of the time, Stevens again seems to be slightly exaggerating his characters' overall use of nonstandard variants. What seems particularly exaggerated, however, is the frequency with which Stevens' characters use *is* in

contexts where Standard English would require _are_. His Negro youths use _is_ in _are_ contexts 35% to 55% of the time and his adult Negro characters (excluding Morris) use _is_ in _are_ contexts 80% to 100% of the time, whereas Labov's Negro peer groups used _is_ in _are_ contexts only 5% of the time or less. Apparently Stevens' dialect portrayal is highly inaccurate in this respect.

3.1.5.4.3 The use of the copula in contexts requiring _am_ in Standard English

The variants tabulated were the presence of _am_, the presence of _is_, and the total absence of a copula in contexts which require _am_ in Standard English. The general tabulating procedure for this variable was the same as that used for _is_ and _are_. The data for _am_ is presented in Table 42.

Table 42. Use of the Copula in SE _am_ Contexts

	_am_ Pres.	_is_ Pres.	Copula Absent	Total	Percent of _is_	Percent of Copula Absence	Total Percent of Nonstandard Variants
Narrator	0	18	25	43	42	58	100
King	0	11	19	30	37	63	100
Playboys	0	6	21	27	23	77	100
King's mother	0	1	0	1	100**	0**	100**
Mr. Johnson	0	0	0	0	--	--	--
The Dealer	0	3	2	5	60*	40*	100*
Morris	0	4	4	8	50*	50*	100*
Tigers	0	0	0	0	--	--	--
Bill Turner	4	0	0	4	0**	0**	0**
Sandy Arizona	0	0	0	0	--	--	--

In _am_ contexts as well as in _are_ contexts, the Negro adolescents use no copula at all more often than they use _is_; this time even the narrator is included. Morris uses each of the two nonstandard variants

50% of the time, but the other Negro adults again reverse the pattern of the adolescents: the adults use *is* more often than no copula at all in contexts where Standard English would require *am*.

Labov found that for his Negro peer groups, *I is* or simply *I* plus zero copula occurred well below 1% of the time (Negro NYC:221;p. 78 here). In sharp contrast, Stevens shows his Negro characters using nonstandard variants 100% of the time.

3.1.5.4.4 *The presence of thas and that where Standard English would require that's or that is*

Stevens also apparently erred somewhat in his handling of *that's*, *what's*, and *it's*. Labov notes (Negro NYC:180; p. 84 here) that instead of using either the standard variants or the nonstandard forms *that*, *what*, and *it*, his Negro peer groups in the "overwhelming majority" of cases used the forms *thas* [ðæs], *whas* [wəs], and *iss* [is].[6] The Negro characters in *Go Down Dead* all seem to use just *that*, *what*, and *it* unrealistically often. For example, out of a total of 40 instances, the narrator uses *thats* or *that is* 13% of the time, *thas* 47% of the time, and *that* 40% of the time.

3.1.5.4.5 *Summary of the use of present tense copula forms*

Stevens is apparently accurate in portraying his white characters as having standard copula usage almost all the time (only the Tigers show any nonstandard usage; they omit *are* once). Also, the Negro

---

[6]According to Labov's explanation the [s] of nonstandard [ðæs], [wəs], and [is] does not represent the copula. He says that in each case the / t / of the underlying form becomes an [s] by assibilation to the contracted copula. The copula sibilant is then deleted, producing [ðæs], [wəs], and [is] (Negro NYC:212; p. 84, n. 21 here).

characters do not omit _are_ more often than is realistic. But in certain major respects, Stevens has inaccurately portrayed his Negro characters' use of the copula. These Negro characters omit _is_ from third singular contexts much more often than is realistic, and they also omit _am_ much too often. Further, they much too frequently use _is_ in contexts where Standard English would require _are_ and _am_. Last, the narrator uses _that_ for _that's_ more often than is realistic, and, indeed, all the characters seem to overuse _that_ for _that's_, _what_ for _what's_, and _it_ for _it's_.

3.1.5.5 The occurrences of invariant _be_

For this analysis, the tabulation included the actual instances of _will be_ or _'ll be_, the instances of _be_ which seemed to be preceded by an implied _will_, the actual instances of _would be_ or _'d be_, the instances of _be_ which seemed to be preceded by an implied _would_, and the apparent instances of habituative _be_. This data is presented in Table 43.

Table 43. Invariant _be_.

	will be	(_will_) _be_	_would be_	(_would_) _be_	Habituative _be_
Narrator	0	8	2	2	2
King	0	13	0	2	0
Playboys	0	6	0	0	0
King's mother	0	0	0	0	0
Mr. Johnson	0	0	0	0	0
The Dealer	1	7	0	0	0
Morris	1	1	0	1	0
Tigers	0	2	0	0	0
Bill Turner	0	0	0	0	0
Sandy Arizona	0	0	0	0	0

For most characters there are so few instances of any of the forms tabulated that no meaningful comparison of characters is possible. However, it is clear that for the Negro youths, be preceded by only an implied will is the rule rather than actual will plus be. This is true for the Dealer also, though he does use will be once along with his seven uses of be preceded by an implied will. Interestingly, there seem to be only two instances of habituative be in the corpus examined: "they dont be just a teach" (p. 138) and "They dont be no mothers" (p. 141). Both of these occur as part of the narration.

In Negro NYC (p. 235; p. 103 here), Labov observes that though his peer groups used invariant be in careful conversation, they seldom used this be in group sessions. In Go Down Dead, there seems to be a parallel to this distribution: the narrator uses invariant be twice, but King and the Playboys do not use it at all in their casual speech.

3.1.5.6 The extension or non-extension of negative concord to all indefinites within a clause

The tabulating procedure used for multiple negation was essentially the same as Labov's (Negro NYC:276, 278-81); Wolfram's procedure was similar (Negro DET:155). The tabulation included all instances of potential or "unrealized" multiple negation, as opposed to all instances of actual or "realized" multiple negation. The indefinite determiner a (he didn't have a knife) was excluded because Labov says it should not be counted as a potential negative (Negro NYC:280). The results of this tabulation are presented in Table 44.

Table 44. Multiple Negation

	Unrealized	Realized	Total	Percent Realized
Narrator	2	48	50	96
King	2	19	21	91
Playboys	0	19	19	100
King's mother	0	2	2	100**
Mr. Johnson	0	2	2	100**
The Dealer	1	6	7	86*
Morris	6	3	9	33*
Tigers	0	1	1	100**
Bill Turner	1	0	1	0**
Sandy Arizona	1	0	1	0**

The Negro youths have 91% to 100% realized multiple negation, and King's mother and Mr. Johnson have 100% (but these adults' percentages are based on obviously insufficient data). The Dealer has 86% realized multiple negation; it is logical for him to have less than King's mother and Mr. Johnson because the Dealer is apparently of higher social status than they. Of all the Negro adults, Morris is as usual closest to Standard English norms: he has only 33% realized multiple negation. The data for the whites is insufficient, but it is interesting that the Tigers have one instance of realized multiple negation and no instances of unrealized multiple negation.

There seem to be no instances of the types of multiple negation which are sometimes used by NNE speakers but which are not used by whites (see p. 107 here for a discussion of these types).

Labov's Inwood white youths showed realized multiple negation 80% of the time in careful style (casual style was not elicited). The Negro peer groups showed realized multiple negation 98% to 99% of the time in both casual style and careful style (Negro NYC:277; pp. 107-8 here).

Labov gives no data for the adults, but apparently they showed realized multiple negation much less often than the youths (Negro NYC:299; p. 108 here). In Wolfram's study the lower working class adults had 65.8% realized multiple negation and the upper working class adults had 33.7%, for careful style and reading style taken together (Negro DET:163; p. 109 here).

Since Labov's Inwood whites showed realized multiple negation 80% of the time, it is realistic that Stevens' Tigers should use multiple negation--which they do in the one instance where they might have it. Stevens was realistic also in having his Negro youths use realized multiple negation 91% to 100% of the time. A comparison of the percentages for Stevens' Negro adults with the percentages for the working class adults in Wolfram's study suggests that Stevens also realistically portrayed the Dealer's and Morris' use of multiple negation. Stevens was unrealistic in showing his other adult Negro characters as having 100% realized multiple negation, but each of these percentages was based on only two instances.

3.1.6 Overall Appraisal of the D[illegible]ect Representation in Go Down Dead

Table 45 presents most of the statistics on the use of nonstandard variants in Go Down Dead.

Stevens successfully distinguishes the white characters from the Negro characters by their respective uses of standard and nonstandard variants, and to some extent he similarly distinguishes the white adults from the white adolescent gang members, the Tigers. Still more praiseworthy is the way in which Stevens uses phonological and grammatical features to distinguish Morris from the other Negro adults,

Table 45. Summary of Statistics for Go Down Dead

Column:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Narrator	94	97	100	84	100	55	100	42	96
King	95	100	97	74	100	43	100	37	91
Playboys	94	96	100	79	100	35	100	23	100
King's mother	100*	--	100**	100*	100*	100*	100**	100**	100**
Mr. Johnson	100*	100**	100	38	100	75	--	--	100**
The Dealer	100	100**	100	40	100	88	100*	60*	86*
Morris	50	100**	100	0	85	31	100*	50*	33*
Tigers	0**	0**	50**	0**	50**	0**	--	--	100**
Bill Turner	0**	--	0	0*	0**	0**	0**	0*	0**
Sandy Arizona	0**	--	0*	0*	0**	0**	--	--	0**

Col. 1: % of r-absence from your, yourself, their, and the expletive there
Col. 2: % of ed absence from past tense and past participle forms (restricted count)
Col. 3: % of third singular -s absence
Col. 4: % of is absence from third singular contexts
Col. 5: Combined % for presence of is in are contexts and total absence of copula in are contexts
Col. 6: % of is in are contexts
Col. 7: Combined % for presence of is in am contexts and total absence of copula in am contexts
Col. 8: % of is in am contexts
Col. 9: % of realized multiple negation

all of whom are of lower social standing (with the possible exception of the Dealer, who probably is also of the upper working class but who may or may not have the contact with whites that Morris has).

Though Stevens is generally successful in reflecting social distinctions by varying his characters' percentages of nonstandard variants, the percentages themselves often differ markedly from Labov's and Wolfram's statistics. It is true that Stevens is generally accurate in portraying his Negro characters' use of multiple negation and omission of _r_ from _your_, _yourself_, _their_, and the expletive _there_. But he misrepresents Negro nonstandard speech by having his characters frequently use _that_, _what_, and _it_ rather than _thas_, _whas_, and _iss_. And he in several ways exaggerates the nonstandard nature of his Negro characters' speech: these characters (Morris is an exception) show the absence of past participle and past tense -_ed_ more often than is realistic; they show the absence of the third singular -_s_ and the copula _is_ and the copula _am_ far more often than is realistic; and they far too frequently use _is_ in contexts where Standard English would require _are_ or _am_. In short, for almost all of the variables, all of the Negro characters except Morris are shown as using nonstandard variants nearly 100% of the time, whereas real people of similar ages and similar social backgrounds use the nonstandard variants of most of these variables much less often in their casual speech. Stevens has, for the most part, greatly exaggerated the nonstandard nature of his Negro characters' speech.

3.2 THE COOL WORLD

3.2.1 Plot Synopsis

Go Down Dead (1966) and The Cool World (1959) are quite similar in plot--so similar, in fact, that one wonders how much Shane Stevens' book owes to The Cool World. This earlier book, Cool World, is narrated by 14-year-old Richard Custis, called "Duke" by his friends. Duke belongs to a black gang, the Royal Crocadiles; the Wolves, apparently also black, are the Crocadiles' chief enemies. Cool World is primarily a description of several days in Duke's life, days during which he becomes the favorite of the Crocadiles' whore, Lu Ann; he takes over the leadership of the Crocadiles from Blood, who has become a drug addict; he tries to steal money from his grandmother to buy a gun; he sells marijuana to earn money for a gun; and he goes to Central Park and sells himself to homosexuals, again hoping to earn enough for the gun. Still without the gun, Duke finally leads his gang in a pre-arranged fight with the Wolves, after which he is taken into custody by the police because members of his gang have killed at least one of the Wolves.

3.2.2 Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed

I analyzed the representation of the nonstandard dialect features of Duke the narrator, of Duke the character, of the Crocadiles as a whole (excluding Duke), and of four other characters--the only characters for whom there was enough dialogue to make such analysis worthwhile. For the narrator, only the longer narrative passages were analyzed: pp. 16-17; 22; 67-71; 84-86; 125-126; 138-140; and 148-150. The entire corpus of each of the characters and groups of characters

was analyzed, but in no case did I tabulate more than the first 50 variants of a variable. Table 46 lists the characters whose speech was analyzed and, in most cases, gives the pages where the analyzed speech is found.

Table 46. Cool World Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed

Character	Page Numbers of Corpus
Duke	passim
Crocadiles (excluding Duke)	passim
Lu Ann	37-39; 49; 54-56; 80-82; 93; 98; 101-102; 106-109
Mama	11-13; 28-29; 40-42
Royal Baron	43-49; 92; 127-129
Miss Dewpont	44-46; 113-118; 128

Like King and the Playboys, Duke and his Crocadiles are members of a black adolescent Harlem gang. Lu Ann is the Crocadiles' whore: she sells herself to them only, each time earning $1.00 for herself and $.50 for the Crocadiles' treasury (Duke, however, pays her with marijuana). Lu Ann is approximately the same age as Duke; she apparently has had almost no education whatsoever. Duke's mother, "Mama," is from Alabama. At the time the story takes place, she has no "husband" (no man living with her); apparently she works in a laundry or drycleaner's. Like King's mother, Duke's mother would be considered as lower working class according to Labov's Negro NYC scheme of classification.

Royal Baron's social status is questionable. Royal is from the West Indies. He is the founder of what he calls the "Poinciana

Company," an outfit which deals in drugs. The outstanding impression one gets from reading Duke's reproduction of Royal's speech is that he has had some education, but that he is not of high enough social standing to know better than to try to flaunt his actually rather meagre learning. The following passage is typical of Royal (p. 44): "'Bobby came to me a year ago. A poor boy off the streets. Lackin all the amenity of home and lovin parents. I took him into my home and give him a start as Sales Man. Today that boy has an apartment of his own. He has a 1957 Chevrolay an many friends of both sexes.'" Because of Royal's obvious pretensions to gentility, he should probably be classified as upper upper working class, or perhaps as lower middle class.

Miss Dewpont, Royal Baron's "secretary," is probably his mistress. Royal is black, but Miss Dewpont is white. It is impossible to tell into what social class she best fits.

As with the narrator of Go Down Dead, I am arbitrarily assuming that Duke the narrator of Cool World has reported people's speech not just as he himself hears it, but as it "really is" according to the author, Warren Miller.

3.2.3 Styles Analyzed

As in Go Down Dead, all or almost all of the speaking situations in Cool World seem most likely to elicit a casual speaking style. In addition to this casual speaking style there is, of course, the informal writing style of the narrator; again, however, this informal writing style turns out to be very much like the protagonist's speaking style.

3.2.4 The Variables Analyzed

Preliminary reading of Cool World revealed that it would not be profitable to analyze all eleven of the variables discussed in Chapter 2. As in Go Down Dead, nonstandard pronunciations in place of standard unvoiced th are almost never indicated; the one exception I noted was in a statement by Royal: "'I like a Lad who get up bright an early an start de day wit de sun'" (p. 43). When Duke notes that Royal talks "real crazy" (p. 43), he is apparently referring to Royal's use of [d] for standard voiced th (de for the) and his use of [t] for standard unvoiced th (wit for with); however, Duke gives us no more examples of this craziness.

Apparently r is missing from no words except your, yourself (which is written as two words, you self), their, and the expletive there; again, therefore, the presence or absence of r was tabulated for only these words.

As for the noun plural inflection, there were only rare instances of its absence: "'Lackin all the amenity of home'" (Royal p. 44); "his family moved 16 time" (p. 69); "'He been on it 4-5 week'" (Duke, p. 34). Possessive nouns were rarely uninflected, as in "Lu Ann place" (p. 53).

Since the nonstandard variant of four of the eleven variables discussed in Chapter 2 occurs only rarely, just the following were tabulated:

1. the spelling of present participles and other words which end in unstressed -ing in Standard English:

   a. the presence of final -ing as opposed to final -in in present participles and other words which end in unstressed -ing in Standard English;

   b. the occurrences of the standard quasi-modal form going to, as compared with the variants goin to, gonna, and gone;

2. the presence or absence of r in your, your self, their, and the expletive there;

3. the presence or absence of final -t and -d not representing past tense or past participle;

4. the presence or absence of -ed indicating past tense or past participle;

5. the presence or absence of -s indicating verb third singular present tense;

6. present tense copula forms:

a. the presence or absence of is in third singular contexts;

b. the presence of are, the presence of is, and the total absence of a copula in contexts where Standard English would require are;

c. the presence of am, the presence of is, and the total absence of a copula in contexts where Standard English would require am (tabulated for Duke only);

d. the presence of that, what, and it where Standard English would require that's or that is, what's or what is, it's or it is (tabulated for Duke only);

7. the occurrences of invariant be;

8. the extension or non-extension of negative concord to all indefinites within a clause.

As in the previous tables of this chapter, I am calling attention to the dubious validity of certain percentages by placing one asterisk after those based on five through nine instances and by placing two asterisks after those based on fewer than five instances.

3.2.4.1 The spelling of present participles and other words which end in unstressed -ing in Standard English

3.2.4.1.1 The presence of final -ing as opposed to final -in in present participles and other words which end in unstressed -ing in Standard English

The tabulating procedure used here was essentially the same as Labov's (Negro NYC:122). In addition to present participles, this

tabulation included such words as morning, feeling, nothing, and something. However, anything and everything were excluded from the tabulation because the final syllables in these words are not unstressed. All variants of the phrase going to were also excluded; these were tabulated separately. The results of these two tabulations are presented in Table 47 and Table 48, respectively.

Table 47. Final -ing as Opposed to Final -in

	-ing Present	-in Present	Total	Percent of -in
Narrator	5	45	50	90
Duke	0	50	50	100
Crocadiles	3	47	50	94
Lu Ann	0	41	41	100
Mama	0	14	14	100
Royal	5	28	33	85
Miss Dewpont	0	16	16	100

It seems logical for the narrator to use the nonstandard variant -in somewhat less often than Duke and his Crocadiles. It is also logical for Royal to use the -in variant less often than the other Negro characters, since he is apparently of higher social standing, or aspires to be. But why, then, does Miss Dewpont--Royal's white "secretary"--use the nonstandard variant 100% of the time? I think the answer is not that Miller has ineptly portrayed her speech, but that she identifies with blacks. She tells Duke (p. 117): "'I have try to be happy with my own kind an break thru with my own kind but Duke I jus cant make it. When you cant make it with you own kind then you have to break thru with the kind whut you can break thru with be they whut ever color they may be.'"

In the Negro NYC study (p. 122; p. 31 here), Labov found that for casual speech, the Negro adolescent gang members used [in] 97% of the time. No casual style data was available for any other group. But even for careful style, most of the working class adult groups used [in] about 85% of the time (the exception was the upper working class adult group of Northern origin, who used [in] only 34% of the time in careful speech).

Thus Miller has accurately portrayed his Negro adolescents' use of [in]. Probably his portrayal of Mama as using 100% [in] is close to accurate too: Labov implies (Negro NYC:121; p. 32 here) that uniform [in] pronunciation is quite frequent in the South, and Duke's mother comes from Alabama. It is likely also that Miller's portrayal of Royal as using 85% [in] is accurate. And the portrayal of Miss Dewpont as using 100% [in] seems reasonable, since she is more comfortable with blacks than with whites.

3.2.4.1.2 The occurrences of the standard quasi-modal form going to, as compared with goin to, gonna, and gone

Table 48 shows the number of occurrences of going to, goin to, gonna, and gone.

The variants in Table 48 are presented in an order of descending formality, from the most formal variant, going to, to the nonstandard variant, gone. The intermediate variants, goin to and gonna, are both used colloquially by SE speakers. Obviously every character whose language was analyzed always or almost always uses gonna rather than any of the other variants. It is interesting, though--and logical--that only Royal uses the more formal of the two intermediate colloquial

Table 48. Going to, goin to, gonna, and gone

	going to	goin to	gonna	gone	Total
Narrator	0	0	7	1	8
Duke	0	0	19	0	19
Crocadiles	0	0	45	0	45
Lu Ann	0	0	5	0	5
Mama	0	0	2	0	2
Royal	0	3	6	0	9
Miss Dewpont	0	0	2	0	2

forms, goin to. It is also interesting, but not logical, that only the narrator has any instances of the nonstandard gone. This spelling is probably meant to suggest the pronunciation [gɔ̃·], with a nasalized vowel; Labov explains in detail how going to can be reduced to / g / plus a single vowel plus a nasal and finally to [g] plus a nasalized vowel. This pronunciation is common in the informal speech of Negroes, particularly Negro adults (Negro NYC:251). Since [gɔ̃·] is characteristic of informal speech, it seems odd that there should be one instance of gone in Duke's narration but no instances in any character's speech.

3.2.4.2 The presence or absence of r in your, your self, their, and the expletive there

Table 49 presents data on the presence and absence of r in your, your self, their, and the expletive there.

All the characters are represented as always pronouncing these words without the r. This time no distinction was made between Royal and the other Negro characters.

As noted before, Labov found that in casual style preconsonantal [r] and final [r] before a word beginning with a consonant were

Table 49. Absence of r from your, your self, their, and the Expletive there

	r Present	r Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator	0	28	28	100
Duke	0	19	19	100
Crocadiles	0	14	14	100
Lu Ann	0	5	5	100*
Mama	0	4	4	100**
Royal	0	9	9	100*
Miss Dewpont	0	10	10	100

absent 100% of the time for the Negro adolescent peer groups and about 93% of the time for all the Negro adults. Final [r] before a word beginning with a vowel was absent about 95% of the time for the Negro adolescent peer groups and about 80% of the time for the Negro working class adults (Negro NYC:102; p. 41 here). In analyzing Cool World, as in analyzing Go Down Dead, I did not take into account the phonological environment following the actual or potential r in the four words analyzed. Even so, it seems that the 100% r-absence of the Cool World adults is slightly high. The 100% r-absence of the youths, however, is approximately accurate.

3.2.4.3 The presence or absence of final -t and -d not representing past tense or past participle

For all speakers in Cool World, the word and is always written as an, perhaps because even SE speakers seldom pronounce the d of and. Since some speakers in Cool World use this conjunction far more often than others, including the variants of and in the tabulation would obscure the relevant differences or similarities which might otherwise appear in the characters' use of final -t and -d in

monomorphemic consonant clusters. Therefore the variants of and were excluded form this tabulation. Table 50 presents the data for the presence and absence of final -t and -d not representing past tense or past participle.

Table 50. Absence of Final -t and -d from Monomorphemic Clusters

	-t or -d Present	-t or -d Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator	37	13	50	26
Duke	42	8	50	16
Crocadiles	39	11	50	22
Lu Ann	39	11	50	22
Mama	32	7	39	18
Royal	45	5	50	10
Miss Dewpont	40	10	50	20

Duke has a 16% absence of -t and -d, whereas the other Negro youths have a 22% absence and the narrator has a 26% absence. I can think of no logical explanation for these differences--if indeed they are great enough to be significant. On the other hand, it seems logical for the status-seeking Royal to have a lower percentage of absence than anyone else, which he does, though admittedly his 10% absence is only 6% lower than Duke's.

Labov again took into account the phonological environment which followed, whereas I did not. Also, he apparently did not exclude and. Labov found that in casual speech the Negro adolescent peer groups omitted final [t]'s and [d]'s from monomorphemic clusters 98% of the time when a consonant followed and about 50% of the time when a vowel followed. For the working class adults in casual speech,

the average figures were 89% absence when a consonant followed and 53% when a vowel followed (Negro NYC:128; p. 50 here).

Obviously the percentages of -t and -d absence for Miller's characters are unrealistically low. These unrealistically low percentages at first seem surprising, since writers of dialect literature have generally tended to show their characters as using an unrealistically high percentage of nonstandard variants (Labov 1969d:60); Go Down Dead is typical in showing this sort of exaggeration. But the explanation for the low percentages of -t and -d absence in Cool World may be fairly simple: possibly Miller was afraid that in many cases his readers would not know what word was intended if the final -t or -d were omitted. Perhaps this is also why Stevens in Go Down Dead did not even attempt to represent the absence of final [t] and [d] from monomorphemic consonant clusters. Would a reader be sure to recognize hand spelled as han', for example, or mind spelled as min'? Probably these words would be clear in context, but it is understandable that a writer might hesitate to omit the final letters of such words--particularly when, as with these words, a reader could mentally add a final letter other than the one intended (hang; mint, mine). Furthermore, words without their final -t's and -d's are especially difficult to interpret when there is no apostrophe to indicate the omission of a letter from the standard spelling. Neither Stevens in Go Down Dead nor Miller in Cool World used apostrophes to indicate the omission of letters; apparently each author was trying to create the illusion that his relatively illiterate narrator actually wrote the book. The potential difficulty

of interpreting such apostrophe-less spellings as han and min perhaps accounts for the fact that Stevens did not even attempt to represent the absence of such final [t]'s and [d]'s and the fact that Miller's characters show unrealistically low percentages of -t and -d absence.

3.2.4.4 The presence or absence of -ed indicating past tense or past participle

Verbs which regularly take [ɨd] for past tense and past participle were excluded from this tabulation. Adjectivally-functioning words which end in -ed were also excluded because in some cases I could not tell whether they were or were not derived from past participle verb forms. The results of this tabulation are presented in Table 51.

Table 51. Absence of -ed Indicating Past Tense or Past Participle

	-ed Present	-ed Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator	18	11	29	38
Duke	6	6	12	50
Crocadiles	8	6	14	43
Lu Ann	0	1	1	100**
Mama	0	3	3	100**
Royal	3	0	3	0**
Miss Dewpont	3	3	6	50*

For past tense and past participle -ed, the narrator has a lower percentage of absence than Duke the character and the other Negro youths, as would be expected. Lu Ann and Mama have 100% absence, which is twice as high as the percentages for any of the other characters; however, these high percentages are unreliable

because they are based on so few instances. Royal's 0% absence is similarly unreliable, though by now one would expect him to have a percentage at least somewhat lower than the other characters. Miss Dewpont, as usual, has about the same percentage as the Negro youths.

Labov found that in casual conversation, the Negro adolescent peer groups showed past tense and past participle [t] and [d] absence about 85% of the time when the next word began with a consonant and about 13% of the time when the next word began with a vowel. The working class adults in casual conversation showed 60% absence in the former phonological environment, 22% in the latter (Negro NYC:128, 149; p. 50 here). Thus the 38% to 50% -ed absence for most of Miller's characters is probably fairly accurate.

3.2.4.5 The presence or absence of -s indicating verb third singular present tense

This tabulation excluded the verbs which do not simply add [s], [z], or [ɨz] in the third singular. The results are given in Table 52.

Table 52. Absence of -s Indicating Third Singular Present Tense

	-s Present	-s Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator	8	42	50	84
Duke	2	11	13	85
Crocadiles	1	23	24	96
Lu Ann	0	10	10	100
Mama	0	4	4	100**
Royal	2	5	7	71*
Miss Dewpont	0	6	6	100*

The other Crocadiles have a noticeably higher percentage of third singular -s absence than Duke has. It is not surprising that they should have a higher percentage than Duke the narrator, but there seems to be no particular reason for them to have a higher percentage than the character Duke. As with the past tense and past participle -ed, Lu Ann and Mama have 100% absence. The data on which this percentage is based is rather scarce for Mama, but not this time for Lu Ann. As usual, Royal has a lower percentage of the nonstandard variant than anyone else and, also as usual, Miss Dewpont has at least as high a percent as the Negro youths--higher, in this particular case.

Labov found that in casual style his Negro adolescent peer groups showed about 70% absence of third singular [s] and [z]. His Negro working class adults showed 0% to 33% absence in casual style, but in careful style the working class adults of Southern origin had noticeably higher percentages of absence: 23% to 82% (Negro NYC: 161-2; p. 76 here). For casual style and reading style taken together, Wolfram's lower working class adults (some of Northern origin and some of Southern) showed 57.1% absence of the third singular inflection and the upper working class adults showed 50.6% absence (Negro DET:150; p. 77 here).

These figures from Labov and Wolfram make it apparent that the percentages of third singular -s absence for Miller's characters are unrealistically high, since all of the characters except Royal show this absence over 80% of the time, and Royal has 71% absence.

3.2.4.6 Present tense copula forms

The same general exclusions were made here as in tabulating copulas for Go Down Dead (see p. 147 here).

3.2.4.6.1 The presence or absence of *is* in third singular contexts

The tabulations for the presence and absence of *is* are given in Table 53.

Table 53. Absence of *is* from Third Singular Contexts

	is Present	*is* Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Narrator	12	38	50	76
Duke	7	26	33	79
Crocadiles	27	23	50	46
Lu Ann	2	6	8	75*
Mama	0	3	3	100**
Royal	15	11	26	42
Miss Dewpont	1	4	5	80*

Surprisingly, the Crocadiles' percentage of *is* absence is considerably lower than that of any single character, except Royal. Otherwise the usual pattern holds: the other youths and Miss Dewpont have about the same percentage of absence, here from 75% to 80%; Mama has 100% absence (but again this percentage is based on very few instances); and Royal has less *is* absence than anyone else, 42%.

In his Negro NYC study, Labov found that the white Inwood groups did not show any absence of *is*. In casual style, the Negro peer groups omitted *is* about 61% of the time when a pronoun preceded the copula position and about 34% of the time when some other noun phrase preceded. For casual style, the adults had about 27% *is*

absence in the former environment, 14% in the latter (Negro NYC: 194-5; p. 86 of this study).

Thus the percentage of *is* absence for Miller's characters seems unrealistically high.

3.2.4.6.2 The use of the copula in contexts requiring *are* in Standard English

The variants tabulated were the presence of *are*, the presence of *is*, and the total absence of a copula in *are* contexts. This data is presented in Table 54.

Table 54. Use of the Copula in SE *are* Contexts

	are Pres.	*is* Pres.	Copula Absent	Total	Percent of *is*	Percent of Copula Absence	Total Percent of Nonstandard Variants
Narrator	0	2	31	33	6	94	100
Duke	1	0	22	23	0	96	96
Crocadiles	1	5	44	50	10	88	98
Lu Ann	0	0	13	13	0	100	100
Mama	0	1	6	7	14*	86*	100*
Royal	1	1	11	13	8	84	92
Miss Dewpont	3	0	8	11	0	73	73

The youths and Mama all use the nonstandard variants 100% or nearly 100% of the time. Surprisingly, Royal uses nonstandard variants 92% of the time, while Miss Dewpont uses nonstandard variants only 73% of the time. Mama has the highest percentage of *is* in *are* contexts: 14%. Lu Ann has the next highest percentage of *is*, which is to be expected because her use of nonstandard variants is normally similar to Mama's. Surprisingly, Royal is next highest with 8% *is*.

Labov's Negro adolescent peer groups showed an absence of _are_ 79% of the time and they used _is_ for _are_ 5% of the time or less (Negro NYC:219; p. 88 here). His working class adults omitted _are_ about 60% of the time in casual style (Negro NYC:241; p. 88 here). Most of Miller's characters show the absence of a copula in _are_ contexts somewhat more frequently than 79% of the time; the rate of copula absence ranges from 92% to 100% (with the exception of Miss Dewpont, who shows only 73% absence). But for the presence of _is_ in _are_ contexts, even Mama's 14% presence does not seem a great deal higher than would be realistic.

3.2.4.6.3 _The use of the copula in contexts requiring am in Standard English_

The use of the copula in SE _am_ contexts was tabulated for just Duke the speaker. He has 1 instance of _I am_, 1 instance of _Im_, 0 instances of _I is_, and 21 instances of _I_ without any copula. This 91% use of _I_ with zero copula is highly unrealistic, according to Labov's data. He found that _I is_ and _I_ plus zero copula occurred well below 1% of the time for his Negro peer groups (Negro NYC:221; p. 78 here).

3.2.4.6.4 _The presence of that, what, and it where Standard English would require that's or that is, what's or what is, it's or it is_

In contrast to the characters in _Go Down Dead_, no one in _Cool World_ uses the variants _thas_, _whas_, and _is_ (all of which are pronounced with a final [s]). Therefore I tabulated for Duke the speaker just the occurrences of _thats_, _whats_ or _whuts_, and _its_, as opposed to

merely that, what, and it. For these three items, Duke has 10 instances with the -s and 26 instances without, giving a 72% occurrence of simply that, what, and it. A separate tabulation of thats as opposed to that yielded 9 instances with the -s and 11 without, for a 58% occurrence of that. Apparently these percentages are much too high to be realistic: Labov says that instead of using either the standard variants or the nonstandard forms that, what, and it, his Negro peer groups in the overwhelming majority of cases used forms which can best be transcribed as thas, whas, and iss (Negro NYC:180; p. 84 here).

3.2.4.7 The occurrences of invariant be

For this analysis, the tabulation included the actual instances of full or contracted will be, the instances of be with a preceding implied will, the actual instances of full or contracted would be, the instances of be with a preceding implied would, and the instances of habituative be. This data is presented in Table 55.

Table 55. Invariant be

	will be	(will) be	would be	(would) be	Habituative be
Narrator	1	0	0	0	0
Duke	1	8	0	0	1
Crocadiles	0	7	0	0	0
Lu Ann	0	1	0	0	0
Mama	0	1	0	0	0
Royal	1	3	0	1	0
Miss Dewpont	1	2	0	1	0

For Duke and the Crocadiles, be preceded by only an implied will is the general rule rather than be preceded by full or contracted will.

There seems to be a tendency for the other speakers to show this pattern also. In all of the corpora analyzed, I found only one sentence that seems to contain habituative be: "'Don't be botherin me'" (Duke, p. 101). According to Labov, it is not unrealistic for Duke and the other speakers to have almost no instances of habituative be: Labov's Negro peer groups seldom used habituative be in casual conversation, and adults use it even less than these youths (Negro NYC:235; p. 103 here).

3.2.4 The extension or non-extension of negative concord to all indefinites within a clause

For this analysis the same exclusions were made as in tabulating multiple negatives for Go Down Dead (see p. 154). The results of this tabulation are presented in Table 56.

Table 56. Multiple Negation

	Unrealized	Realized	Total	Percent Realized
Narrator	15	19	34	56
Duke	8	19	27	70
Crocadiles	3	15	18	83
Lu Ann	5	4	9	44*
Mama	3	4	7	57*
Royal	0	2	2	100**
Miss Dewpont	1	0	1	0**

The narrator shows realized multiple negation less often than most of the characters, which seems logical. But why does Duke show multiple negation 13% less often than the Crocadiles? And, much more surprising, why do Lu Ann and Mama have less than 60% realized multiple negation, since they usually use nonstandard variants 100%

of the time? Royal's 100% realization and Miss Dewpont's 0% realization are equally puzzling, though admittedly the data is too scarce for Royal's and Miss Dewpont's percentages to be reliable. There does not seem to be any logical explanation for this unusual patterning of the data.

In the Cool World corpora analyzed, there seem to be no instances of the types of multiple negation which are sometimes used by NNE speakers but which are not used by whites (see p. 107 here for a discussion of these types).

Labov's Negro peer groups had 98% to 99% realized multiple negation in both casual and careful style (Negro NYC:277; p. 107 here).

Labov's peer group data suggests that Duke and his friends have unrealistically low percentages of multiple negation: the percentages for Miller's youths are all below 85%, most of them considerably below 85%. A comparison of the data for Wolfram's adults with the data for Mama suggests that her 57% figure may be slightly low too: Wolfram's lower working class adu'ts had 65.8% realized multiple negation. Royal's 100% realization is of course unrealistically high, but this percentage is based on only two instances.

3.2.5 Overall Appraisal of the Dialect Representation in The Cool World

Table 57 presents the most important statistics on the use of nonstandard variants in Cool World.

Miller generally succeeds in suggesting social similarities and differences through his characters' differing percentages of

Table 57. Summary of Statistics for The Cool World

Column:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Narrator	90	100	26	38	84	76	100	6	56
Duke	100	100	16	50	85	79	96	0	70
Crocadiles	94	100	22	43	96	46	98	10	83
Lu Ann	100	100*	22	100**	100	75*	100	0	44*
Mama	100	100**	18	100**	100**	100**	100*	14*	57*
Royal	85	100*	10	0**	71*	42	92	8	100**
Miss Dewpont	100	100	20	50*	100*	80*	73	0	0**

Col. 1: % of -in rather than -ing in words such as standing and nothing
Col. 2: % of r-absence from your, your self, their, and the expletive there
Col. 3: % of -t and -d absence from monomorphemic clusters
Col. 4: % of -ed absence from past tense and past participle forms
Col. 5: % of third singular -s absence
Col. 6: % of is absence from third singular contexts
Col. 7: Combined % for the presence of is in are contexts and the total absence of a copula in are contexts
Col. 8: % of is in are contexts
Col. 9: % of realized multiple negation

nonstandard variants. Duke and the other Crocadiles generally have about the same percentages of nonstandard variants, which is logical. Lu Ann uses a higher percentage of nonstandard variants than anyone else except Mama. This seems understandable in an adolescent girl who somehow has never learned that there is an Atlantic Ocean and that she can reach it by subway. Mama's percentages of nonstandard variants are presumably too high, relatively speaking, since Labov and Wolfram found that the adults in their studies almost always had a lower percentage of nonstandard variants than the adolescents. But it may be relevant that Mama's percentages are often (more often than anyone else's) based on fewer than five instances of the variable in question. As for Royal, he is distinguished from the others by having, in several instances, a lower percentage of nonstandard variants. This is appropriate because he has a higher social status than anyone else--and apparently aspires to an even higher social status than he has. Since the white Miss Dewpont identifies with Negroes, it is appropriate too that she should use a very high percentage of nonstandard variants.

In some cases, Miller's characters have realistic percentages of nonstandard variants. Miller accurately represents his characters' use of [in] for standard [iŋ], and the representation of past tense and past participle -ed absence is approximately accurate for the youths. Further, the presence of is in are contexts is generally not much higher than is realistic. On the other hand, the percentages of -t and -d absence from monomorphemic consonant clusters and the percentages of realized multiple negation are unrealistically low;

the percentages of third singular -s absence and is absence are unrealistically high; and the percentages of r-absence and are absence are slightly high. But what seems most unrealistic about the dialect representation is the frequent absence of am; in Duke's speech, for example, am is missing 91% of the time whereas according to Labov's figures, it should be missing less than 1% of the time. Another highly unrealistic feature is the frequent use of that, what, and it rather than that's, what's, and it's or thas, whas, and iss [is]. Duke uses that, what, and it 72% of the time, whereas Labov's Negro peer groups used thas, whas, and iss in most cases.

One reviewer of Cool World has commented that somewhere along the line, Miller's manner of representing Negro dialect becomes mannered, "in an odd, tapping, manicured way."[7] I must agree that--from the very beginning, in fact--Miller's dialect representation does often have an unnatural staccato effect, which I think is primarily due to the omission of am and the use of such unrealistic forms as that rather than thas. On the other hand, Miller's dialect representation is good in many ways--good enough, in fact, that I can almost believe James Baldwin's statement that he could not tell whether the author of Cool World were Negro or white.[8]

---

[7]Anon. untitled rev. of The Cool World, in The New Yorker 35:16.169 (June 6, 1959).

[8]"Death of an Author": obituary notice for Warren Miller in Newsweek 67:19.107 (May 9, 1966).

3.3 MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND

3.3.1 Plot Synopsis[9]

Some of the facets of Claude Brown's life as described in Manchild in the Promised Land are as likely to unsettle white middle class readers as are the events in Go Down Dead and The Cool World, even though--or perhaps because--Manchild is not a fictional work but an autobiography.

Brown was born in Harlem in 1937; his parents had come to New York from South Carolina in 1935. By the time he was six years old, Claude--called "Sonny" by his friends--had become part of the Harlem street life: he spent much of his time fighting and stealing. When he was eight, he for a while underwent psychiatric observation at Bellevue Hospital. Brown[10] tells us "I had lots of fun in the nutbox and learned a lot of new tricks, just as I thought" (p. 23). When Claude was approximately ten years old, he and his friends started their own gang, of which he was president (p. 56). At the age of eleven, Claude was sent to the Wiltwyck School for emotionally disturbed and deprived boys. He spent two years there, two enjoyable years. Brown tells us that on one of his visits home he "just wanted to get back to Wiltwyck and steal something and get into a lot of trouble....We could all get together up at Wiltwyck, raise a lot of

---

[9]The terms "plot" and "character" and other terms used in discussing fiction are perhaps not entirely appropriate in discussing autobiography, but they are used here for convenience because I am dealing with an autobiography as if it were fiction.

[10]I use "Brown" when referring to Claude Brown the writer of Manchild, but "Claude" when referring to Claude Brown the character in Manchild.

hell, and show people that we weren't pigs and that we couldn't be fucked over but so much" (p. 98).

Claude continued this way of life when he was released from Wiltwyck, and he began using and selling marijuana. (He tried heroin only once, however; it made him so sick that he never used it again.) When he was thirteen, Claude was shot while stealing sheets from a clothesline. He was sent to Warwick reform school after his recovery. Brown tells us of the benefits of Warwick (p. 146):

> We all came out of Warwick better criminals. Other guys were better for the things I could teach them, and I was better for the things that they could teach me. Before I went to Warwick, I used to be real slow at rolling reefers and at dummying reefers, but when I came back from Warwick I was a real pro at that, and I knew how to boost weak pot with embalming fluid. I even knew how to cut drugs, I had it told to me so many times. I learned a lot of things at Warwick. The good thing about Warwick was that when you went home on visits, you could do stuff, go back up to Warwick, and kind of hide out. If the cops were looking for you in the city, you'd be at Warwick.

Altogether, Claude was sent to Warwick three times. He was released for the last time in July of 1953, at the age of sixteen. He knew he would never be going back to Warwick because of his age; the next time he was arrested, he would be sent not to a reform school, but to a regular prison. "I came back on the street and got ready for it. I started dealing pot" (p. 159).

But even though the street life was the only life Claude knew, he was no longer sure he wanted to be part of it. After all, he had already been fighting and stealing for at least ten years, and he had been using and selling marijuana for several years also. He no longer had to prove his manhood. Yet he knew it would not be long before he would get into a situation which would require him to kill someone in order to maintain his reputation, and he did not like the

idea of killing. Finally he stopped selling marijuana because he was afraid he would have to kill some drug addict: addicts fairly often held up the dealers in order to get the marijuana they couldn't afford, and the code of the streets would require Claude to kill any addict who held him up, or tried to.

By this time Claude had moved out of his parents' apartment. Soon afterwards he enrolled in night courses at Washington Irving High School in downtown Manhattan. Most of his friends were "in jail or dead or strung out on drugs" (p. 179), but Claude had somehow managed to avoid these disasters. And by the time he was seventeen he had retired from street life, being determined not to go to jail and not to kill anybody (pp. 179, 201).

Claude soon moved from Harlem to Greenwich village. While continuing in night school, he supported himself by working as a busboy, watch-crystal fitter, shipping clerk, deliveryman, postal clerk, and bookkeeper.[11] He graduated from Washington Irving Evening High School in 1957 and returned to Harlem for a while, selling cosmetics and playing piano with a jazz group.

The last chapter of Manchild begins "I haven't lived in New York for nearly four years now" (p. 415). Brown does not tell us what he did during those four years, but, in fact, he went to college. He graduated from Howard University in 1965 and began law school. His goal is a career in politics.[12]

---

[11] Current Biography 1967, p. 44.

[12] Current Biography 1967, p. 45.

3.3.2 Characters and Styles Analyzed

Claude Brown's first person narration in Manchild is almost entirely in standard dialect, except sometimes when Brown is reporting his past thoughts: "I thought, Lord, don't tell me he's gon give that away" (p. 114). Since such narrative passages with nonstandard dialect features were relatively infrequent (and since they seemed more like dialogue anyway), I did not analyze the language of the narrator to determine the relative proportion of standard and nonstandard variants. I analyzed only the dialogue, which was defined as any group of words occurring in quotation marks.

Two of the characters whose speech was analyzed are Claude's mother, "Mama," and his father, "Dad." They came from South Carolina to New York in 1935, two years before Claude was born. Claude's father had gone through only the fourth grade and his mother had gone through only the fifth grade (p. 291). In New York, Claude's father held a railroad job and his mother worked as a domestic.[13]

One needs to read Manchild only once to realize that the most radically nonstandard representation of speech in the book occurs on pages 40-44, in Mama's lengthy explanation to Aunt Bea of all the trouble Claude has been causing, and in a discussion Claude has with his younger brother, Pimp (so dubbed by the whore who took Mama to the hospital the night the baby was born). It also is clear on a first reading that Mama's speech is never so nonstandard as when she is talking to Aunt Bea, who has come from South Carolina for a visit; most of the rest of Mama's remarks are directed to Claude, who does

---

[13] Current Biography 1967, p. 43.

not elicit nearly as nonstandard a style as Mama's relative from the South. Therefore two styles were tabulated for Mama: an "Aunt Bea" style and a "Claude" style.

Claude's speech on pages 42-44 is in several respects much more nonstandard than his speech elsewhere in the book. It seemed likely that his percentage of nonstandard variants might decrease as he became older, so I analyzed his speech in three different age brackets: age 9 (preadolescence), age 13 through age 15 (adolescence), and age 17 through age 21 (late adolescence or even adulthood). When Claude was 16 he was beginning to reject the street life and to accept the fact that he needed to break away from Harlem; since this was a transitional year, it was omitted from the tabulations. During his late teens and early twenties Claude began moving toward a middle class life style; in these years he seems to belong to the upper part of Labov's upper working class. It seemed logical that as an accompaniment to his rising social status, his use of nonstandard dialect features would decrease during these years.

It also seemed possible that in Claude's late teens and early twenties, his use of nonstandard features might show some stylistic variation. Therefore the age 17 through 21 classification was divided into three subclasses: excited style, casual style, and careful style. This "excited" style is comparable to the "group" style Labov elicited in his Negro NYC study. However, Claude's "casual" style would also be more comparable to this "group" style than to the "single" style Labov elicited; it is Labov's "group" style (usually referred to here as "casual" style) to which I have compared the casual style of the characters in Go Down Dead and

Cool World. Claude's "careful" style is comparable to Labov's "single" style (Negro NYC) or "careful" style (Social Stratification study) and to Wolfram's "interview" style.

In Claude's case it was not on the basis of perceived dialect differences that I devised these stylistic classifications. Rather, I used non-linguistic criteria. Claude's speech was classified as excited style only when it is clear from what Claude says or from the narration that he is emotionally upset, as, for example, when the reader is told "I just got mad, and I couldn't take it any more. Before I realized what was happening, I was shouting at her" (p. 386). As for Claude's careful style, this was defined according to two different criteria. His discussion of the Black Muslims on page 340 seems particularly mature and rational in tone, so I tabulated Claude's speech on this page separately from his usual casual speech. Then, on pages 352-360, Brown describes his love affair with a white girl, Judy. It seemed logical that Claude would use his most standard speech when talking to her, so I tabulated Claude's speech in this section along with his discussion of the Black Muslims. Claude's "casual" style includes all of his dialogue between pages 179 and 414 except that which is considered excited or careful style.

In addition to analyzing the speech of Claude's parents and of Claude himself, I analyzed the speech of three other characters. First, there is Johnny, age 21: "he was about the hippest cat on Eighth Avenue, the slickest nigger in the neighborhood" (p. 108). Johnny sold drugs, bought and resold stolen goods, and had a number of girls whoring for him. To Claude and his friends, Johnny was king of the street life. In addition to analyzing Johnny's speech,

I analyzed part of the speech of Danny. Four years older than Claude, Danny and two of his buddies were responsible for introducing Claude to the street life. Danny was a heroin addict for several years. The speech sample analyzed occurs after Danny has cured himself of his drug habit; he is approximately 24 years old at this time. Although he is selling drugs, in most other ways Danny is no longer part of the street life.

The third minor character whose speech was analyzed is Judy, the white girl whom Claude comes to love. She is about seventeen, or so Claude thinks (p. 351). Her social status is uncertain. However, her piano playing, her family's strenuous opposition to her involvement with Claude, and--I admit--her speech, all suggest that she is of at least the lower middle class.

Johnny's, Danny's, and Judy's styles are considered casual because their speech situations seem likely to elicit casual style. Dad's style I would classify as casual-to-excited, since some instances of his speech occur when he obviously is upset. As previously explained, Mama seems to have two styles, one which she uses in talking to Aunt Bea and one which she uses in talking to Claude. I would classify Claude's style at age 9 and at ages 13 through 15 as casual, since his speech situations seem likely to elicit casual style. At ages 17 through 21, Claude apparently has three basic kinds of speech situations: situations which are likely to elicit an excited style, situations likely to elicit a casual style, and situations likely to elicit a careful style. On the basis of these three kinds of situations, Claude's speech at ages 17 through 21 is classified as excited style or casual style or careful style.

Table 58 lists the characters whose speech was analyzed and gives in most cases the precise page numbers where the analyzed speech is found.

Table 58. Manchild Characters Whose Speech Was Analyzed

Character	Page Numbers of Corpus
Mama	
Aunt Bea style	40-42
Claude style	passim, excluding 40-42
Dad	passim
Claude	
Age 9	42-44
Ages 13 through 15	102-156 (passim)
Ages 17 through 21	
Excited style	all or in some cases part of pp. 217; 224; 307-308; 322; 363-365; 386; 397-398; 408-410
Casual style	all of Claude's speech from pp. 179-414, except that analyzed as excited style or careful style
Careful style	340; 350-362
Johnny	113-118
Danny	256-262
Judy	350-362

3.3.3 The Variables Analyzed

As noted previously, the most radically nonstandard speech in Manchild occurs on pages 40-44. I therefore consulted these pages, particularly the three pages containing Mama's speech, to determine what nonstandard variants it might be profitable to tabulate in Manchild. As expected, Mama's speech suggested that it would be useful to tabulate only some of the variables discussed in Chapter 2.

I only rarely found nonstandard spellings indicating nonstandard pronunciations of what would be unvoiced th in Standard English.

Claude uses mout' for mouth and wit for with (p. 43), and Mama uses sumpin for something (pp. 42, 43, 44). Except for these instances, there are no uses on pages 40-44 of nonstandard spellings indicating nonstandard variants of this variable. I decided therefore to tabulate just something versus sumpin and, separately, to tabulate with versus wit. The former tabulation yielded results which again can be described briefly. In talking to Aunt Bea, Mama uses sumpin 6 out of 6 times; throughout the book there seemed to be no other instances of sumpin. Since wit for standard with occurs somewhat more frequently, the results of this tabulation are presented in detail later in this section.

Instances of words with an r missing also occur very rarely. Claude at age 9 has two such instances, two instances of huh for her (p. 43). And in talking to Aunt Bea, Mama uses sho for adverbial sure 3 out of 3 times and they for their 2 out of 2 times. But since there are 5 instances of standard sure but no instances of sho in the style Mama uses with Claude, and since there are 2 instances of their but no instances of the nonstandard variant they, I concluded that it would not be profitable to make a detailed tabulation of these variants.

It is not often that final -t's and -d's are missing from monomorphemic consonant clusters, either. I noticed jis for just (Claude, p. 64; Dad, p. 73); can' for can't (Johnny, p. 117); ole for old (Mama, pp. 24, 27); and tole for told (Mama, p. 27). The only similarly nonstandard forms which occur at all often are don' for don't and didn' for didn't. For this variable, I therefore

tabulated only the presence or absence of -t in don't and didn't.

In Manchild the phrase supposed to is usually written as suppose to, even in the normally standard narrative passages. Used to likewise is usually written use to. Excluding these two forms, I made (in the same way as for Cool World) a detailed tabulation of the presence and absence of -ed indicating past tense and past participle. However, this tabulation produced meagre results. Only Mama shows any absence of past tense and past participle -ed; she has 18% absence in her "Aunt Bea" style and 6% absence in her "Claude" style (each statistic is based on approximately 15 instances).

In Mama's speech on pages 40-42, there are 24 instances of noun plurals; all are standard. There are 5 possessive noun phrases, and 2 of these lack the possessive -'s. But after examining Mama's "Claude" style for possessives, I concluded that it would not be profitable to examine everyone's speech for possessive -'s; there are not enough possessive noun phrases to make such a statistical analysis worthwhile.

While tabulating most of the other variables, I looked for instances of invariant be. Since there did not seem to be any instances of be preceded by an implied will or would, only the actual occurrences of habituative be were tabulated.

After eliminating the various unproductive and potentially unproductive tabulations, I still found several tabulations worth making and discussing in detail. The rest of this section presents the detailed results obtained from tabulating the following:

1. the spelling of present participles and other words which end in unstressed -ing in Standard English:

a. the presence of final -ing as opposed to final -in in present participles and other words which end in unstressed -ing in Standard English;
b. the occurrences of the standard quasi-modal form going to, as compared with gonna and gon;

2. with as opposed to wit;

3. the presence or absence of final -t in didn't and don't;

4. the presence or absence of -s indicating verb third singular present tense;

5. present tense copula forms:

a. the presence or absence of is in third singular contexts;
b. the presence or absence of are in contexts where Standard English would require are;

6. the occurrences of habituative be;

7. the extension or non-extension of negative concord to all indefinites within a clause.

As in the previous tabulations of this chapter, I am calling attention to the dubious validity of certain percentages by placing one asterisk after those based on five through nine instances and by placing two asterisks after those based on fewer than five instances.

3.3.3.1 The spelling of present participles and other words which end in unstressed -ing in Standard English

3.3.3.1.1 The presence of final -ing as opposed to final -in in present participles and other words which end in unstressed -ing in Standard English

This tabulation excluded all variants of the phrase going to, which were tabulated separately. The results of these two tabulations are presented in Table 59 and Table 60, respectively.

Table 59. Final -ing as Opposed to Final -in

	-ing Present	-in Present	Total	Percent of -in
Mama				
Aunt Bea style	6	40	46	87
Claude style	22	68	90	76
Total for Mama	28	108	136	78
Dad	14	36	50	72
Claude				
Age 9	1	7	8	88*
Ages 13-15	0	46	46	100
Ages 17-21				
Excited	7	16	23	70
Casual	126	111	237	47
Careful	46	0	46	0
Total, 17-21	179	127	306	41
Johnny	0	10	10	100
Danny	39	14	53	27
Judy	36	0	36	0

Mama has -in a higher percent of the time in her "Aunt Bea" style than in her "Claude" style, as expected. She and Dad both have fairly high percentages of -in: 78% overall for Mama, 72% for Dad. Claude's speech generally shows the kind of age and style stratification that was expected: he has a higher percentage of nonstandard -in at age 9 and at ages 13-15 than at ages 17-21. Within the latter category, his excited style shows 70% -in, his casual style shows 47%, and his careful style shows 0%. The only divergence from the anticipated pattern is that at age 9 he has 88% -in whereas at ages 13-15 he has 100%.

Some pertinent observations can also be made about the other characters' use of -in. Johnny has 100% -in, which is logical because he holds such a high place in the street life hierarchy. In one

sense Danny is still part of the street life, since he is selling drugs. But in another sense he is not part of the street life: he has cured himself of his drug habit and, like Claude, he no longer has any need to prove his manhood. His use of nonstandard variants might therefore be expected to resemble Claude's use in casual style at ages 17-21 or to be somewhat higher than Claude's at this time. In the case of nonstandard -in, however, Danny's 27% use is lower than Claude's 47% use in casual style at ages 17-21. Judy's 0% use of -in is somewhat unrealistic. Although she is white and apparently a speaker of Standard English, it is not logical that she should have -ing in every case, since SE speakers sometimes do use the [in] pronunciation. Labov found, for example, that lower middle class white New Yorkers used about 34% [in] in casual speech and upper middle class white New Yorkers used about 10% (Social Stratification:398). The contrast is interesting between Judy and Miss Dewpont of Cool World. Miss Dewpont seeks out black men because they are black, whereas Judy claims she is interested in Claude simply because he is attractive as a total person. One might expect, then, that Miss Dewpont's speech would resemble that of Negro nonstandard speakers whereas Judy's would not. This is in fact the case.

In Labov's Negro NYC study (p. 122; p. 31 here), the preadolescent Negro peer groups used [in] 100% of the time in both casual and careful style; the adolescent Negro peer groups used [in] 97% of the time in casual style and 92% of the time in careful style. For careful style, the lower working class Negro adults who had come to the North from the South used [in] 85% of the time; the lower working class adults

from the North used [in] 77% of the time; and the upper working class adults from the North used [in] 35% of the time. (For this variable, casual style was not elicited from the adults.)

These figures suggest that the percentages of -in for the characters in Manchild are generally low, either somewhat low or very low. However, the age, socioeconomic, and style stratification is generally realistic. As an adolescent, Claude uses -in a higher percentage of the time than his parents. But after Claude returns to high school and moves out of Harlem, he uses a lower percentage of -in than his parents. Danny, who has rejected most aspects of the street life, also has a lower percentage of -in than Claude's parents. This pattern is realistic, as are the style differences for Mama and Claude.

3.3.3.1.2 The occurrences of the standard quasi-modal form going to, as compared with gonna and gon

Table 60 shows the number of occurrences of going to, gonna, and gon.

Surprisingly, Mama uses gon only 33% of the time in talking to Aunt Bea but 82% of the time in talking to Claude. Dad's 92% use of gon is considerably higher than Mama's overall 70%; this difference is in accordance with the general pattern of sex stratification Wolfram found in his Negro DET study. It may at first seem surprising that Claude's parents have a higher percentage of gon than Claude has even at age 9 and at ages 13-15. However, Labov notes that the pronunciation of going to as [g] plus a nasalized vowel, the pronunciation presumably indicated by the spelling gon, is most common in the informal speech of adult Negroes (Negro NYC:251).

Table 60. going to, gonna, and gon

	going to	gonna	gon	Total	Percent of gon
Mama					
Aunt Bea style	0	4	2	6	33*
Claude style	1	2	14	17	82
Total for Mama	1	6	16	23	70
Dad	0	1	11	12	92
Claude					
Age 9	0	2	2	4	50**
Ages 13-15	0	4	10	14	71
Ages 17-21					
Excited	2	1	5	8	63*
Casual	11	15	30	56	54
Careful	6	1	0	7	0*
Total, 17-21	19	17	35	71	49
Johnny	0	1	14	15	93
Danny	4	2	10	16	63
Judy	1	0	0	1	0**

Claude's use of gon again generally shows the pattern of age and style stratification that was anticipated. There is again one break in the pattern: he uses 50% gon at age 9 but 71% gon at ages 13-15. Then, however, his use of gon drops: for ages 17-21 he has 63% gon in excited style, 54% in casual style, and 0% in careful style.

Johnny's 93% use of gon is logical because of his high position in the street life. Also as expected, Danny's 63% use of gon is not much higher than Claude's 54% use in casual style at ages 17-21. Judy's 0% use of gon is likewise what one would expect.

3.3.3.2 With as opposed to wit

Table 61 indicates the number of occurrences of with and wit.

Table 61. *With* as Opposed to *wit*

	with	*wit*	Total	Percent of *wit*
Mama				
Aunt Bea style	7	0	7	0*
Claude style	6	0	6	0*
Total for Mama	13	0	13	0
Dad	5	1	6	17*
Claude				
Age 9	1	2	3	67**
Ages 13-15	5	7	12	58
Ages 17-21				
Excited	7	0	7	0*
Casual	15	1	16	6
Careful	12	0	12	0
Total, 17-21	34	1	35	3
Johnny	1	2	3	67**
Danny	5	0	5	0*
Judy	5	0	5	0*

Surprisingly, Mama does not use *wit* at all, even when speaking to Aunt Bea. But Dad uses *wit* 17% of the time, and Claude too uses *wit*. In this case, Claude has a higher percentage of the nonstandard variant at age 9 than at ages 13-15. He again uses the nonstandard variant less in late adolescence than when he is younger. The contrast is, in fact, quite sharp: he uses *wit* about 60% of the time as a preadolescent and adolescent, but only 3% of the time, overall, in late adolescence. The fact that Claude has *wit* 0% of the time in excited style but 6% of the time in casual style suggests that some passages considered "casual" might actually be more typical of Claude's excited speech. Further examination of certain passages has confirmed this suspicion; these passages have a relatively high percentage of several of the nonstandard variants tabulated.

The data for the three minor characters is quite scarce. But as expected, Johnny uses wit relatively frequently, in 2 out of 3 instances. Judy too follows the expected pattern with no instances of wit. Danny's 0% use is somewhat lower but not much lower than Claude's 6% use in casual style at ages 17-21.

Only Wolfram investigated the pronunciation of the final consonant in the particular item with. He found that for careful style and reading style taken together, lower working class Negroes used a [t] in with 72.7% of the time, upper working class Negroes used a [t] 69.7% of the time, and upper middle class whites had 2.3% [t] (Negro DET:84, 86). These figures suggest that Mama's 0% use of wit is unrealistically low. Also, Dad's 3% use of wit is unrealistically low, as are Claude's 3% use at ages 17-21 and Danny's 0% use. However, the percentages for Claude's use of wit as a preadolescent and adolescent are probably fairly accurate, as is Johnny's 67%. Judy's use is not unrealistic.

3.3.3.3 The presence or absence of final -t in didn't and don't

This tabulation included all instances of didn't and don't, as opposed to didn' and don'. The data is presented in Table 62.

As expected, Mama uses the -t-less variants more often in talking to Aunt Bea than in talking to Claude. Dad surprisingly has no instances of the nonstandard variants. Claude has the -t-less variants 67% of the time at age 9, 4% of the time at ages 13-15, and 1% of the time overall at ages 17-21. These statistics for Claude are somewhat unusual in one obvious respect: for the previous tabulations, Claude's percentage of nonstandard variants has been nearly as high or higher at ages 13-15 than at age 9. As for the minor characters,

Table 62. Absence of -t from didn't and don't

	-t Present	-t Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Mama				
Aunt Bea style	7	7	14	50
Claude style	36	1	37	3
Total for Mama	44	8	52	15
Dad	21	0	21	0
Claude				
Age 9	3	6	9	67*
Ages 13-15	23	1	24	4
Ages 17-21				
Excited	10	0	10	0
Casual	78	1	78	1
Careful	15	0	15	0
Total, 17-21	160	2	162	1
Johnny	3	0	3	0**
Danny	11	0	11	0
Judy	18	0	18	0

the fact that Johnny has no instances of the -t-less variants is particularly surprising, even though overall he has only 3 instances of the words analyzed. Danny's 0% is close to Claude's 1% use of the -t-less variants in casual style at ages 17-21. Judy, as usual, has no nonstandard variants.

In his Negro NYC study (p. 128; p. 50 here), Labov found that in casual speech the preadolescent Thunderbirds omitted final [t]'s and [d]'s from monomorphemic clusters 97% of the time when a consonant followed and 36% of the time when a vowel followed; the Negro adolescent peer groups omitted these final [t]'s and [d]'s 98% of the time when a consonant followed and about 50% of the time when a vowel followed. For the working class adults in casual style, the average figures were 89% absence when a consonant followed and 53%

absence when a vowel followed. In careful style the working class adults had 86% absence when a consonant followed and 49% when a vowel followed. Wolfram's upper middle class whites had 66.4% absence when the following environment was consonantal, 11.5% when it was non-consonantal; these figures are for careful style and reading style taken together (Negro DET:62; p. 54 here).

The only approximately realistic statistic for Brown's characters is Claude's 67% absence of -t at age 9; of the other statistics, even Mama's 50% absence in her Aunt Bea style is somewhat low.

3.3.3.4 The presence or absence of -s indicating verb third singular present tense

This tabulation excluded the verbs which do not simply add [s], [z], or [ɨz] in the third singular. The results are presented in Table 63.

Mama has 90% -s absence in her Aunt Bea style and 43% absence in her Claude style; as usual she uses a higher percentage of the nonstandard variant when talking to Aunt Bea. Dad has only 43% absence of -s, and Claude shows -s absence only at age 9; at that age, Claude uses no -s in 3 out of 3 instances. Of the three minor characters, even Johnny has no -s absence.

Labov found that in casual style, the preadolescent Negro peer groups showed an absence of third singular [s]'s and [z]'s about 85% of the time; the Negro adolescent peer groups showed about 70% absence; and the Negro working class adults showed about 20% absence. In careful style, lower working class Negro adults who had come to New York City from the South showed about 73% absence of third singular [s]'s and [z]'s; lower working class Negro adults from the

Table 63. Absence of -s Indicating Third Singular Present Tense

	-s Present	-s Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Mama				
Aunt Bea style	1	9	10	90
Claude style	4	3	7	43*
Total for Mama	5	12	17	71
Dad	4	3	7	43*
Claude				
Age 9	0	3	3	100**
Ages 13-15	0	0	0	--
Ages 17-21				
Excited	4	0	4	0**
Casual	35	0	35	0
Careful	5	0	5	0*
Total, 17-21	44	0	44	0
Johnny	1	0	1	0**
Danny	6	0	6	0*
Judy	6	0	6	0*

North showed about 8% absence; and upper working class Negro adults from the North had 0% absence of these endings. The Inwood whites likewise had 0% absence (Negro NYC:161-2; p. 76 here).

It is odd that in Labov's study the lower working class Negro adults of Southern origin had not much more than 20% absence of third singular [s]'s and [z]'s in casual style but about 73% absence in careful style. On the basis of such skewed data I hesitate to draw any conclusions as to whether Mama's 71% overall absence of the third singular inflection and Dad's 43% absence are realistic.

Somewhat surprisingly, Claude's 100% absence of the third singular at age 9 is not a great exaggeration; Labov's preadolescents had a relatively high 85% absence. The 0% figures are all of course unrealistically low, except Judy's.

3.3.3.5 Present tense copula forms

The same general exclusions were made here as in tabulating copulas for Go Down Dead and Cool World (see p. 147).

3.3.3.5.1 The presence or absence of is in third singular contexts

The tabulations for the presence and absence of is are given in Table 64.

Table 64. Absence of is from Third Singular Contexts

	is Present	is Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Mama				
Aunt Bea style	6	5	11	45
Claude style	17	3	20	15
Total for Mama	23	8	31	26
Dad	9	1	10	10
Claude				
Age 9	8	0	9	0*
Ages 13-15	10	2	12	17
Ages 17-21				
Excited	8	0	8	0*
Casual	71	0	71	0
Careful	13	0	13	0
Total, 17-21	92	0	92	0
Johnny	1	0	1	0**
Danny	6	0	6	0*
Judy	7	0	7	0*

Mama again has a higher percentage of the nonstandard variant in her Aunt Bea style than in her Claude style: 45% absence of is in the former style, 15% in the latter. Dad has only 10% absence. Claude surprisingly has no absence of is at age 9 but 17% absence at ages 13-15. At ages 17-21 Claude has 0% absence of is. The minor characters too have 0%.

Labov found that in casual style the Negro preadolescent Thunderbirds had about 60% absence of _is_ when a pronoun preceded the copula position and about 42% absence when some other noun phrase preceded; the Negro adolescent groups had 61% absence in the former environment, 34% in the latter; and the Negro working class adults had 27% absence after a pronoun, 14% after some other noun phrase. In careful style, the Negro working class adults had about 12% absence, on the average. The nonstandard-speaking Inwood whites showed no absence of _is_ (Copula:17-18; Negro NYC:194-5; p. 86 here).

These figures suggest that Mama's overall 26% _is_ absence is slightly high. Dad's 10% absence is somewhat low. Claude's 17% absence as an adolescent is decidedly low, and of course all the 0% absences are unrealistically low, except Judy's.

Both Labov and Wolfram found that copula absence was higher when a pronoun preceded the copula position than when some other noun phrase preceded; also, they found that copula absence was higher when a present participle or the quasi-modal _gonna_ (SE _going to_) followed the copula position than when some other kind of phrase followed (Copula 17-18; Negro NYC:194-5; Negro DET:170, 172; pp. 86-7 here). To see whether these patterns would hold for copula absence in _Manchild_, I additionally tabulated real or potential _is_ and _are_ only when the copula position is preceded by a personal pronoun and only when the copula position is also followed by a present participle or _gonna_ or _gon_. In most cases this further restriction on the tabulation of _is_ reduced the already small corpus so greatly that meaningful comparisons are impossible. However, three relevant observations can be made. First, Claude's 17% _is_ absence at ages 13

to 15 is not as unrealistically low as it at first seemed, since none of his 12 instances of the variable meet the conditions of the restricted count. Second, Dad's use of *is* fails to conform to the expected pattern: he has 10% *is* absence in the full count but 0% absence in the restricted count (the latter figure, however, is based on only 4 instances). Third, Mama's use of *is* does conform to the expected pattern: she has 26% *is* absence overall in the full count but 42% absence in the restricted count. This higher percentage in the restricted count accords with Labov's and Wolfram's observations of actual speech.

3.3.3.5.2 The presence or absence of *are* in contexts where Standard English would require *are*

For this variable, the corpus was restricted in the same way as for the original "full" tabulation of *is*. The presence of *is* in *are* contexts was not tabulated because in the entire book I discovered only 4 instances of this. Claude uses *is* for SE *are* 4 times at age 9; at this age, he has no instances of *are* in *are* contexts.

Table 65 gives the data for the presence and absence of *are*.

Mama again has a higher percentage of the nonstandard variant in her Aunt Bea style than in her Claude style, though admittedly the 100% absence for the former style is based on only 2 instances. Dad has 100% *are* absence. Claude's use of *are* shows the expected pattern: he has 70% *are* absence at ages 13 to 15; at ages 17 to 21 he has 17% absence in excited style, 5% absence in casual style, and 0% absence in formal style. Johnny has 100% absence, as one might expect; however, this statistic is based on only 3 instances. Danny has 0% *are* absence,

Table 65. Absence of *are* from SE *are* Contexts

	are Present	*are* Absent	Total	Percent of Absence
Mama				
Aunt Bea style	0	2	2	100**
Claude style	4	5	9	56*
Total for Mama	4	7	11	64
Dad	0	6	6	100*
Claude				
Age 9	0	0	0	--
Ages 13-15	3	7	10	70
Ages 17-21				
Excited	5	1	6	17*
Casual	56	3	59	5
Careful	16	0	16	0
Total, 17-21	69	4	73	6
Johnny	0	3	3	100**
Danny	6	0	6	0*
Judy	8	0	8	0*

which is not much lower than Claude's 5% absence in casual style at ages 17 to 21. Judy, as expected, has 0% absence.

Labov found (Negro NYC:219; p. 88 here) that the Negro preadolescent Thunderbirds showed an absence of *are* 84% of the time and that the Negro adolescent peer groups showed *are* absence 79% of the time. These figures are for all preceding and following grammatical environments taken together. When a present participle or *gonna* followed the copula position, the preadolescents had 91% *are* absence and the adolescents had 87% absence. The working class adults omitted *are* about 60% of the time in casual style. In careful style, upper working class adults omitted *are* about 14% of the time. The Inwood whites did not delete *are* (Negro NYC:241; pp. 88 and 91 here).

Wolfram's upper middle class whites showed no absence of *are* (Negro DET:169; p. 92 here).

Mama's 64% *are* absence is rather accurate, whereas Dad's 100% absence seems somewhat high. Johnny's 100% absence is also somewhat high. Claude's 70% *are* absence at ages 13 to 15 seems fairly accurate, though perhaps somewhat low. Claude's 17% absence in excited style and his 5% absence in casual style are low, and of course all the 0% absences are low, except Judy's.

As with *is*, I made an additional "restricted" tabulation of *are*: I tabulated real or potential *are* only when the copula position is preceded by a personal pronoun and only when it is followed by a present participle or *gonna* or *gon*. Dad and Johnny of course still have 100% absence of *are*, and Claude still has 17% absence for ages 17-21 in excited style. For all the rest of the tabulations which are above 0% in the full count, the percentages are higher in the restricted count: Mama has 64% overall absence in the full count but 71% absence in the restricted count; Claude at ages 13-15 has 70% absence in the full count, 100% absence in the restricted count; and for casual style at ages 17-21, Claude has 5% absence in the full count but 9% absence in the restricted count. (Each of these restricted count percentages is based on 6 or more instances; most are based on 6.) Again, these higher percentages in the restricted count accord with Labov's and Wolfram's observations of actual speech.

3.3.3.6 The occurrences of habituative *be*

As explained at the beginning of this section on the variables analyzed, I looked for instances of invariant *be* while tabulating the

other variables. Since there did not seem to be any instances of *be* preceded by an implied *will* or *would*, only the actual occurrences of habituative *be* were tabulated.

There are 5 instances of habituative *be* for Dad, 1 for Claude at ages 13-15, and 1 for Claude in casual style at ages 17-21. Three of Dad's instances occur in one sentence: "'You see that they [drug addicts] be out there so long, look like they be dying, and they be hanging around there for years'" (p. 326). It is surprising that Dad should have more instances of habituative *be* than Claude has as an adolescent, since Labov found that Negro ghetto youths used *be* in this way much more frequently than adults. But even these youths seldom used habituative *be* in their casual conversation; they used it much more frequently in careful speech (Negro NYC:235; p. 103 here). Therefore Claude's obviously low frequency of habituative *be* in casual speech is realistic.

3.3.3.7 The extension or non-extension of negative concord to all indefinites within a clause

The tabulating procedure used here was the same as for multiple negation in *Go Down Dead* and *Cool World* (see p. 154). The results of this tabulation are presented in Table 66.

Mama uses 100% realized multiple negation in talking to Aunt Bea and 89% in talking to Claude; this difference is in accordance with her usual stylistic variation. Dad also has a high percentage of realized multiple negation: 90%. Claude has 100% realized multiple negation at age 9 and 78% at ages 13-15. The only other deviation from his expected pattern is that he has 0% realized multiple negation in excited style at ages 17-21, but 23% in casual

Table 66. Multiple Negation

	Unrealized	Realized	Total	Percent Realized
Mama				
Aunt Bea style	0	15	15	100
Claude style	4	32	36	89
Total for Mama	4	47	51	93
Dad	2	18	20	90
Claude				
Age 9	0	8	8	100*
Ages 13-15	2	7	9	78*
Ages 17-21				
Excited	4	0	4	0**
Casual	24	7	31	23
Careful	3	0	3	0**
Total, 17-21	31	7	38	19
Johnny	1	0	1	0**
Danny	9	1	10	10
Judy	2	0	2	0**

style; however, the 0% for excited style is based on only 4 instances. Johnny has only 1 instance of potential multiple negation, and in this case the multiple negation is not realized. Danny has 10% realized multiple negation, which is lower than Claude's 23% in casual style at ages 17-21. Judy has, as expected, 0%.

Labov's Negro peer groups had 98% to 99% realized multiple negation in both casual and careful style (Negro NYC:277; p. 107 here). Labov gives no data for the adults. Wolfram found that in careful style and reading style taken together, his lower working class adults had 65.8% realized multiple negation and his upper working class adults had 33.7% His upper middle class whites (adults and youths together) had 1.2% (Negro DET:156, 163; pp. 108-9 here).

The statistics for Wolfram's adults suggest that Mama's overall 93% use of realized multiple negation and Dad's 90% are somewhat high. Claude's 100% use at age 9 is fairly accurate. His 78% use at ages 13-15 seems somewhat low, his 23% use in casual style at ages 17-21 is decidedly low, and of course his 0% use in excited style and careful style is very low. Johnny's 0% and Danny's 10% are very low also. Judy's 0% use is approximately accurate.

In Mama's speech there are some examples of the kinds of negation exclusively or almost exclusively used by Negroes (Negro NYC:275-287; Negro DET:153-155; p. 107 here). One such type is the extension of negative concord from an indefinite preceding a verb phrase to a pre-verbal auxiliary; Mama has "'nobody can't make him understand,'" "'nobody ain't work no roots,'" and "'none-a his daddy people ain't never been no rogues'" (p. 40). Labov says that this type of multiple negation is used by some white nonstandard speakers; however Labov did not find this type among white nonstandard speakers in New York City (Negro NYC:276; p. 107 here), nor did Wolfram or the other Detroit Dialect Study investigators find this type among white nonstandard speakers in Detroit (Negro DET:165; p. 107 here). One type of multiple negation which is found exclusively among Negroes is negative inversion, in which the reversal of tense marker and subject characteristic of questions occurs in declarative sentences: in Mama's speech one finds "'Ain't no six-year-old child got no business drinking'" (p. 29) and "'I sure hope ain't nothin' happened'" (p. 407).

3.3.4 Overall Appraisal of the Dialect Representation in Manchild in the Promised Land

Table 67 presents the most important statistics on the use of nonstandard variants in Manchild in the Promised Land.

3.3.4.1 Sociolinguistic variation

Chapter 2 showed in detail how the percentage of nonstandard variants a person uses depends partly on his socioeconomic status, ethnic background, speaking situation (which determines the style), age, and sex. The data compiled for the characters in Manchild allows for comparisons within each of these five categories.

Socioeconomic status. Mama and Dad are members of the lower working class, but Claude finishes high school in his late teens and early twenties and thus acquires at least upper working class status. Claude's mature independence in these years indicates that he is an adult, despite his age, so it seems valid to compare Dad's speech with Claude's casual style at ages 17-21. (It is of course better to compare the speech of the two males than to compare Mama's speech with Claude's, since the latter comparison would introduce the sex factor in addition to the socioeconomic factor.) For all variables except one, Dad has a higher percentage of nonstandard variants than Claude. (The one exception is the use of didn' and don': Dad has 0% use whereas Claude has 1%) In most cases Dad uses the nonstandard variant more than 40% of the time, usually much more than 40% of the time. In these cases the difference between Dad's percentage of nonstandard variants and Claude's percentage ranges from 25% to 95%. Of course the absolute percentages for Dad and Claude may be and often are inaccurate, but at least Brown has presented the socioeconomic

Table 67. Summary of Statistics for Manchild in the Promised Land

Column:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mama								
Aunt Bea style	87	33*	0*	50	90	45	100**	100
Claude style	76	82	0*	3	43*	15	56*	89
Total for Mama	78	70	0	15	71	26	64	93
Dad	72	92	17*	0	43*	10	100*	90
Claude								
Age 9	88*	50**	67**	67*	100**	0*	--	100*
Ages 13-15	100	71	58	4	--	17	70	78*
Ages 17-21								
Excited	70	63*	0*	0	0**	0*	17*	0**
Casual	47	54	6	1	0	0	5	23
Careful	0	0*	0	0	0*	0	0	0**
Total, 17-21	41	49	3	1	0	0	6	19
Johnny	100	93	67**	0**	0**	0**	100**	0**
Danny	27	63	0*	0	0*	0*	0*	10
Judy	0	0**	0*	0	0*	0*	0*	0**

Column 1: % of final -in as opposed to final -ing in words like standing and nothing
Column 2: % of gon as opposed to going to and gonna
Column 3: % of wit as opposed to with
Column 4: % of didn' and don' as opposed to didn't and don't
Column 5: % of third singular -s absence
Column 6: % of is absence
Column 7: % of are absence
Column 8: % of realized multiple negation

contrast that one would expect on the basis of Labov's and Wolfram's studies.

Ethnic background. Judy is the only white person whose speech is represented in Manchild. It is impossible to be certain of her class status, but I have assumed that she belongs to the lower middle class. Since Claude at ages 17-21 apparently belongs to the upper part of the upper working class, it seems reasonable to compare her speech with his at these ages. I have characterized Judy's speech as casual style, because it seems likely that she would use relatively casual speech with Claude (or with any boy friend of equal or lower social status). There are no nonstandard variants in Judy's speech, but Claude often uses nonstandard variants in talking casually with his family and Negro friends. It is logical that Claude's casual speech should show more nonstandard variants than Judy's, since Negroes tend to use nonstandard variants at least somewhat more often than whites of similar social backgrounds, given situations of comparable formality. (At least this was often true for the upper middle class whites and Negroes in Wolfram's study.) Though Claude uses nonstandard variants in casual speech, there are no nonstandard variants in the relatively formal style which he uses in speaking with Judy and in talking with Alley about the Black Muslims. It seems reasonable for Judy's casual speech to be equated with Claude's relatively formal speech, though of course in real life neither a Claude nor a Judy would show complete absence of nonstandard variants. (See pp. 215-6 here for a fuller discussion of this point.)

Style. Both Mama's speech and Claude's speech illustrate stylistic differences. For Mama, the difference in speech styles seems to be

due to a difference in audience: for almost all the variables, she has a higher percentage of nonstandard variants when talking to Aunt Bea than when talking to Claude. In talking to Aunt Bea, who has come from South Carolina for a visit, Mama is apparently reverting to a more radically nonstandard style which she used before coming to New York.

Claude's stylistic variations seem to be controlled by various factors. His speech was classified as excited style only when it is clear from the narration or from what Claude says that he is emotionally upset. His discussion of the Black Muslims was classified as careful style because the content and tone of this discussion seem particularly rational, and the speech used with Judy was likewise classified as careful style because it seemed logical that he would use his most formal style with a white girl. For the most part, the data bears out the assumption that Claude would use a higher percentage of nonstandard variants in excited style than in casual style and a higher percentage in casual style than in careful style. In two cases he has 0% of nonstandard variants in all three styles. Otherwise the only break in the expected pattern is that in three cases his percent of nonstandard variants is lower in excited style than in casual style. This suggests that perhaps some of the passages classified as casual style might better have been classified as excited style, and after looking at the nonstandard features in certain passages I am convinced that this is so. The erroneous classification occurred because I relied only on extra-linguistic criteria, criteria which perhaps were not inclusive enough. Still,

the data tabulated suggests that Claude does have three major speaking styles in his late teens and early twenties.

Age. There are two major age contrasts in the data compiled from Manchild: 1) the contrast between Claude's parents and Claude as a preadolescent and adolescent; and 2) the contrasts in Claude's own speech as he matures. The first contrast can best be illustrated by comparing Dad's speech with Claude's speech at ages 13-15 (the data is scarcer for age 9). In three cases Dad has a higher percentage of nonstandard variants than Claude, and in four cases Claude has a higher percentage than Dad. (In the remaining case there is no data for Claude at ages 13-15.) Both Labov's study and Wolfram's study show that adolescents usually have a higher percentage of nonstandard variants than adults. Thus the contrasts between Dad and Claude are realistic approximately half the time.

Claude's speech was divided into three different age brackets: age 9, ages 13-15, and ages 17-21. For three variables, Claude has a higher percentage of nonstandard variants at age 9 than at ages 13-15, but the reverse occurs for four variables. This lack of a uniform pattern is realistic. Although one might assume that preadolescents would use stigmatized variants more often than adolescents, Wolfram and Labov found that this is not necessarily true; adolescents are perhaps even more likely to reject explicitly adult middle class linguistic norms. There is a striking difference between Claude's use of nonstandard variants as a preadolescent and adolescent and his use of nonstandard variants at ages 17-21. Even in excited and casual styles, Claude has fewer nonstandard variants at ages 17-21 than when

he is younger. This contrast obviously accords with the findings of Labov and Wolfram.

Sex. For linguistic purposes, the major sex contrast in Manchild is between Mama and Dad, both of whom are adult lower working class Negroes who have come from the South. It is more relevant to compare Dad's percentages with the percentages for Mama's "Claude" style than with her overall percentages, since Dad is never shown talking to Aunt Bea or anyone else from down South. His percentage is higher than the percentage for Mama's "Claude" style for four out of eight variables; hers is higher than his for three variables; and for one variable, they have the same percentage. Wolfram's study of Detroit Negro speech showed that in general, men use nonstandard variants more often than women do. Thus the contrast between Dad's use of nonstandard variants and Mama's use accords with Wolfram's findings approximately half the time.

3.3.4.2 Accuracy of the percentages of nonstandard variants

The discussion of sociolinguistic variations in Manchild shows that, for the most part, Brown's representation of dialect features accurately reflects social differences. However, the earlier discussion of the individual variables showed that for all these variables, the percentage of nonstandard variants was unrealistically low for more than half the individual tabulations. Claude's consistent 0% use of nonstandard variants in careful style is especially unrealistic: according to Labov's and Wolfram's statistics, Claude's formal style could be expected to show 35% -in rather than -ing in present participles; about 70% use of wit rather than with; over 50%

use of didn' and don' rather than the variants spelled with final -t; about 13% absence of is and are; and about 34% realized multiple negation. There is, of course, good reason for inaccurately representing Claude as using no nonstandard variants in relatively formal speech. In most literary works the dialogue is spelled in the standard way, though even SE-speaking characters would certainly use colloquial pronunciations and for some variables, would sometimes use what have been considered here as nonstandard variants. For example, in careful conversation Standard English speakers could be expected to have about 8% [in] rather than [iŋ] in present participles, and at least 66% absence of final -t's and -d's from monomorphemic consonant clusters when the following word begins with a consonant (SS:398; Negro DET:62). The percentage of nonstandard variants would of course be even higher for casual speech. Thus when Brown shows Claude as using no nonstandard variants in careful speech, he is merely suggesting that on appropriate occasions Claude speaks as standard a variety of English as anyone else. This may not be entirely realistic, since Negroes tend to use nonstandard variants somewhat more often than whites of similar social backgrounds, given situations of comparable formality. But if Judy is to be presented as having no nonstandard variants in casual speech, even though a real person like Judy would have some nonstandard variants, then certainly Claude ought to be presented as having no nonstandard variants in his relatively formal speech.

3.4 THE REPRESENTATION OF NEGRO NONSTANDARD DIALECT IN GO DOWN DEAD, THE COOL WORLD, AND MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND: A COMPARISON

One need not criticize Shane Stevens (Go Down Dead), Warren Miller (The Cool World), or Claude Brown (Manchild in the Promised Land) for not representing all of the different nonstandard variants which would actually be used by adolescent Negro youths like King, Duke, and Claude. As Sumner Ives noted in "A Theory of Literary Dialect" (1950:138), most examples of literary dialect are deliberately incomplete:

> The author is an artist, not a linguist or a sociologist, and his purpose is literary rather than scientific. In working out his compromise between art and linguistics, each author has made his own decision as to how many of the peculiarities in his character's speech he can profitably represent.

Naturally the extent to which an author represents a dialect will depend partly upon his knowledge of the dialect and partly upon the feasibility of representing the dialect in standard orthography, but consideration for his readers is another major factor: an author does not want his writing to appear too formidable to his intended audience, nor does he want his audience to be uncertain about what words some of his spellings are supposed to represent. George Philip Krapp (1926:523) went so far as to say that the more thoroughly a literary dialect represents the actual speech of a group of people, the less effective it will be from a literary point of view. Though such an extreme statement may not be tenable, it seems reasonable not to expect a writer to include in a literary representation all of the nonstandard features that would actually be used by people of the same social background as his characters. It is more important to

represent a dialect accurately with respect to the features one does choose to represent than to represent it extensively, and it is on the basis of such accuracy that Stevens' and Miller's and Brown's dialect representations must be evaluated.

Shane Stevens, Warren Miller, and Claude Brown all have reflected social distinctions by varying their characters' percentages of nonstandard variants. One sociolinguistic distinction in Go Down Dead is particularly outstanding: Morris--the maker of pornographic movies--is distinguished from the Negro adults of lower social standing by his having, in several instances, fewer nonstandard variants than they. A particularly good feature of the dialect representation in Cool World is the portrayal of the white Miss Dewpont as having a high percentage of nonstandard variants, since she identifies with black people. Manchild is especially good in showing Claude's decreasing use of nonstandard variants as he moves from adolescence to adulthood; also good is the portrayal of Claude as using three different speaking styles when he is in his late teens and early twenties.

The main differences in the three books' representation of nonstandard features are in the actual percentages of these features. To facilitate comparison, Table 68 presents certain data for the narrator and the protagonist in each of the two novels, data from Claude at ages 13-15, and Labov's statistics for his Negro adolescent peer groups' use of the variants tabulated.

Only Stevens does not use a final -in in words like standing and nothing to reflect an [in] pronunciation. The standard -ing spellings

Table 68. Statistics for Go Down Dead, Cool World, and Manchild

	Percent of -in	Percent of Realized Multiple Negation	Percent of -s Absence	Percent of is Absence	Percent of is in are Contexts	Percent of Nonstandard Variants of am	Percent of that
Narrator	0	96	100	84	55	100	40
King	0	91	97	74	43	100	--
Narrator	90	56	84	76	6	--	--
Duke	100	70	85	79	0	91	58
Claude (ages 13-15)	100	78*	--	17	0	0	0
Labov' adolescents	97	98	70	34-61	5	1	infrequent

look very much out of place along with such nonstandard spellings as they for their, go for goes, want for wanted, and so forth.

The high percentages of realized multiple negation for King and the narrator of Go Down Dead are realistic. Miller's characters and Claude have unrealistically low percentages.

Stevens' and Miller's characters have unrealistically high percentages of is absence from third singular contexts. In contrast, Claude's percentage is low; unrealistically low percentages are typical of Manchild. Miller's characters have unrealistically high percentages of third singular -s absence, and Stevens' narrator and protagonist in Go Down Dead have even higher percentages. Indeed, Miller's percentages are in several cases unrealistically high, and Stevens' percentages are frequently even higher. There is no data for Claude's use of third singular -s.

King and the narrator of Go Down Dead have unrealistically high percentages of is in are contexts. The narrator of Cool World, though, has a realistic 6% presence of is, and Duke's and Claude's 0% presence is not far from realistic.

The nonstandard variants of am include the presence of is in am contexts and the total absence of a copula in am contexts. Stevens' characters show 100% use of nonstandard variants, which is highly unrealistic. Unlike King and the narrator of Go Down Dead, Duke does not use is in am contexts. But he has a 91% absence of am, and this is highly unrealistic. In contrast, Claude consistently uses I am or, more frequently, I'm, which is what Labov's Negro adolescent peer groups used at least 99% of the time (Negro NYC:178; p. 78 here).

The narrator of Go Down Dead and Duke of Cool World both have rather high percentages of that rather than that's or thas; Claude, in contrast, has no instances of that. Labov does not give precise statistics, but he notes that his Negro adolescent peer groups used thas in the overwhelming majority of cases; both that's and that occurred infrequently (Negro NYC:180; p. 84 here).

The comparison of these percentages from the three books shows that the nonstandard dialect representation in Cool World is somewhat more accurate than the dialect representation in Go Down Dead. The percentages of nonstandard variants are often unrealistically high in Cool World, but the corresponding percentages are usually even higher in Go Down Dead. The percentages of nonstandard variants are often unrealistically low in Manchild in the Promised Land, but the dialect representation is approximately accurate in certain respects: the characters do not use is in are contexts (except rarely); they do not omit am from contexts where Standard English would require this copula form; and they do not use that rather than that's or thas.

In two of these respects, Brown's dialect representation in Manchild in the Promised Land is much more accurate than Warren Miller's representation in The Cool World; Brown's representation is much more accurate in all three of these respects than the dialect representation in Shane Stevens' Go Down Dead.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION: SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Chapter 1 of this thesis explained why it is impractical to use Linguistic Atlas materials to determine the accuracy of literary representations of urban speech; it was then suggested that the work of the sociolinguists can be used to determine the accuracy of urban dialect representations, particularly representations of recent Northern urban Negro speech. Chapter 2 presented detailed sociolinguistic data for five phonological and six grammatical variables in Negro speech; the last section of this chapter provided statistical generalizations which are potentially useful for determining the accuracy of literary representations of recent Northern urban Negro speech. Chapter 3 used statistics from Chapter 2 to determine the accuracy of the dialect representation in Shane Stevens' Go Down Dead (1966), Warren Miller's The Cool World (1959), and Claude Brown's Manchild in the Promised Land (1965). It was concluded that all three authors have reflected social distinctions by varying their characters' percentages of nonstandard variants; however, the percentages themselves often differ markedly from Labov's and Wolfram's.

This concluding chapter suggests further study relevant to determining the accuracy of literary dialect representations. First, further study is recommended to determine the statistical significance of the sociolinguists' numerical data and of similar numerical data

which has been or might be compiled for literary characters in attempting to determine the accuracy of literary dialect representations. Second, this chapter suggests research to determine readers' reactions to the accuracy or non-accuracy of literary dialect representations.

4.1 STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Certainly one may question the significance of the statistics originally compiled by Labov and by Wolfram, especially Wolfram, and of the statistics compiled for Go Down Dead, The Cool World, and Manchild in the Promised Land.

The validity of Labov's and Wolfram's mean percentages may be questionable because so far the sociolinguists have not had their data analyzed for statistical significance.[1] Wolfram's age stratification statistics are particularly suspect because they are based on only four speakers. Labov says that in his Social Stratification study, ten to twenty individuals in each social class generally were sufficient to reveal a consistent pattern of class stratification, while groups of four or five showed unrelated variation. Similarly, from ten to twenty instances of a given variable produced averages showing a consistent pattern of stylistic variation, while three or four instances produced inconsistent fluctuation (SS:181). Wolfram himself says the limited sample (48 Negro informants) in his study

---

[1]Joan Baratz made this point in commenting on a paper by Roger Shuy. See Report of the Twentieth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, ed. James E. Alatis, 187. Georgetown Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics No. 22, Washington, D. C., Georgetown Univ. Press, 1970.

of Detroit Negro speech needs further extension. And he notes that we still do not know what is "the minimal number of informants in each social 'cell' for the linguist to adequately characterize the behavior of that cell" (1969b:34, 39).

A number of the statistics for the use of nonstandard variants by the characters in Go Down Dead, The Cool World, and Manchild in the Promised Land have the same limitation as some of Wolfram's statistics: they are based on apparently insufficient data. Since Labov's Social Stratification study suggests that from six to ten instances of a given variable may be inadequate and fewer than six instances are almost certainly inadequate for characterizing a person's use of the variants of that variable, some of the statistics presented in Chapter 3 are of dubious validity. Such dubious statistics may well suggest tendencies which might be confirmed if further data were available, but one must be cautious in drawing conclusions about the accuracy of the representation of a character's use of a variable when there are very few instances of that variable.

In discussing the representation of nonstandard speech in the three books analyzed, I operated on the assumption that for each character, the percentages of nonstandard variants should come reasonably close to the comparable average percentages of the sociolinguists, if the dialect representation is to be judged as accurate. This assumption again involves the question of statistical significance: how should one define "reasonably close"? In practice, I generally assumed that percentages which differed from Labov's or Wolfram's by about 10% or less were reasonably close to theirs, but this subjective judgment is not entirely satisfactory.

The kind of statistical analysis undertaken here can be made more objective and more valid if sociolinguists determine the statistical significance of their numerical data, if they discover how many instances of a variable are needed to accurately characterize one's use of that variable, and if one can establish objective and statistically valid criteria for judging a literary character's use of nonstandard variants to be reasonably close or not reasonably close to real people's use of such variants.

4.2 READERS' REACTIONS TO LITERARY DIALECT REPRESENTATION

One issue obviously raised by this thesis is whether it makes any difference if a dialect representation is accurate or not--and if so, what kind of difference it makes. A related issue is whether unrealistically high percentages of nonstandard variants are in any way better than unrealistically low percentages, or vice versa. One might be inclined to argue, for example, that unrealistically high percentages are preferable because they seem more likely to heighten the characterization, to serve an author's purpose of emphasizing characters' differentness from standard speakers. Or, on moral grounds, one might argue for unrealistically low percentages because they seem less likely to encourage the erroneous idea that the speech of some people is nonstandard in all ways and at all times.

Of course one may advocate accuracy in literary dialect representations simply because one values truth for truth's sake. But one has no basis for preferring unrealistically high percentages of nonstandard variants to unrealistically low percentages, or vice versa, unless one can demonstrate that readers do react differently

to relatively low percentages of nonstandard variants than to relatively high percentages. Would most readers notice, for example, that Morris in Go Down Dead uses several nonstandard variants only 50% of the time or less? Or would they erroneously think he invariably uses these nonstandard variants?

Questions such as these suggest the need for subjective reaction tests or perception tests to determine readers' reactions to literary dialect representations,[2] to determine whether people do in fact notice such subtleties in the representation of nonstandard variants as those found in the three books analyzed here. Such a study is needed to provide an objective basis for preferring unrealistically high percentages of nonstandard variants to unrealistically low percentages, or vice versa.

---

[2]William Labov suggested this type of investigation to me in a personal communication of September 19, 1970.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anon. untitled rev. of Warren Miller, The Cool World. 1959. The New Yorker 35:16.169.

Atwood, E. Bagby. 1953. A Survey of Verb Forms in the Eastern United States. Ann Arbor, Mich., University of Michigan Press.

Bailey, Beryl Loftman. 1965. "Toward a New Perspective in Negro English Dialectology." American Speech 40:3.171-77.

_____. 1968. "Some Aspects of the Impact of Linguistics on Language Teaching in Disadvantaged Communities." Elementary English 45:5.570-8, 626. Reprinted in On the Dialects of Children, ed. A. L. Davis, 15-24. Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English, 1968.

Baratz, Joan C. 1969. "Teaching Reading in an Urban Negro School System." In Teaching Black Children to Read, ed. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy, 92-116. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

Bernstein, Basil. 1964. "Elaborated and Restricted Codes: Their Social Origins and Some Consequences." American Anthropologist 66:6.Part 2, 55-69. Reprinted in Communication and Culture, ed. A. G. Smith, 427-41. New York, Holt, Rinehart.

Billips, E. P. 1923. "Some Principles for the Representation of Negro Dialect in Fiction." Texas Review 8:99-123.

Board of Education of the City of New York. 1968. Nonstandard Dialect. Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English.

Bowdre, Paul Hull. 1964. "A Study of Eye Dialect." Dissertation, University of Florida.

Brown, Claude. 1965. Manchild in the Promised Land. New York, New American Library.

"Death of an Author." 1966. Newsweek 67:19.106-7. Obituary article on Warren Miller.

Dillard, J. L. 1964. "The Writings of Herskovits and the Study of the Language of the Negro in the New World." Caribbean Studies 4:2.35-41.

_____. 1968. "Non-standard Negro Dialects." The Florida FL Reporter 6:2.9-10, 12.

_____. 1969. "The DARE-ing Old Men on their Flying Isoglosses; or Dialectology and Dialect Georgraphy." The Florida FL Reporter 7:2.8-10, 22.

Fasold, Ralph W. 1969a. "Orthography in Reading Materials for Black English Speaking Children." In Teaching Black Children to Read, ed. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy, 68-92. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

_____. 1969b. "Tense and the Form Be in Black English." Language 45:4.763-76.

_____. 1970. "Distinctive Linguistic Characteristics of Black English." In Report of the Twentieth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, ed. James E. Alatis, 233-8. Georgetown Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics No. 22. Washington, D. C., Georgetown University Press.

Fasold, Ralph W., and Walt Wolfram. 1970. "Some Linguistic Features of Negro Dialect." In Teaching Standard English in the Inner City, ed. Ralph W. Fasold and Roger W. Shuy, 41-86. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

Foster, Charles William. 1968. "The Representation of Negro Dialect in Charles W. Chesnutt's The Conjure Woman." Dissertation, University of Alabama.

Harris, Joel Chandler. 1911. Nights with Uncle Remus. New York, Houghton Mifflin. First copyrighted 1881.

Haskell, Ann Sullivan. 1964. "The Representation of Gullah-Influenced Dialect in Twentieth Century South Carolina Prose: 1922-1930." Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.

Herskovits, Melville. 1958. The Myth of the Negro Past. 2nd ed. (1st ed. 1941). Boston, Beacon Press.

Hibbard, Addison. 1926. "Aesop in Negro Dialect." American Speech 1:9.495-9.

Ives, Sumner. 1950. "A Theory of Literary Dialect." Tulane Studies in English 2:137-82.

_____. 1954. "The Phonology of the Uncle Remus Stories." Publication of the American Dialect Society No. 22, 3-59.

_____. 1955. "Dialect Differentiation in the Stories of Joel Chandler Harris." American Literature 27:88-96.

Kenyon, John Samuel. 1964. American Pronunciation. Ann Arbor, Mich., George Wahr Publishing Company.

Kenyon, John Samuel, and Thomas Albert Knott. 1953. A Pronouncing Dictionary of American English. Springfield, Mass., C. C. Merriam Company.

Krapp, George Philip. 1924. "The English of the Negro." American Mercury 2:6.190-5.

_____. 1925. The English Language in America, Vol. 1. New York, The Century Company.

_____. 1926. "The Psychology of Dialect Writing." The Bookman 63:5.522-7.

Kurath, Hans. 1949. A Word Geography of the Eastern United States. Ann Arbor, Mich., University of Michigan Press.

Kurath, Hans, and Raven I. McDavid, Jr. 1961. The Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States. Ann Arbor, Mich., University of Michigan Press.

Kurath, Hans, et al. 1939. Handbook of the Linguistic Geography of New England. Providence, R. I., American Council of Learned Societies.

Labov, William. 1964. "Phonological Correlates of Social Stratification." In The Ethnography of Communication, ed. John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes, 164-76. Special publication of the American Anthropologist, 66:6,ii.

_____. 1965. "Stages in the Acquisition of Standard English." In Social Dialects and Language Learning, ed. Roger W. Shuy, 77-103. Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English.

_____. 1966a. "The Linguistic Variable as a Structural Unit." Washington Linguistics Review 3:4-22. Also available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 010 871.

_____. 1966b. The Social Stratification of English in New York City. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

_____. 1967a. "Linguistic Research on the Non-Standard English of Negro Children." Yearbook 1966 of the New York Society for the Experimental Study of Education, pt. 1, 20-39.

_____. 1967b. "The Nonstandard Vernacular of the Negro Community: Some Practical Suggestions." U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 016 947.

_____. 1969a. "Contraction, Deletion, and Inherent Variability of the English Copula." Language 45:4.715-62. Also available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 027 514.

_____. 1969b. "The Logic of Non-standard English." In Linguistic-Cultural Differences and American Education, ed. Alfred C. Aarons et al., 60-74, 169. A special anthology issue of The Florida FL Reporter, 7:1. Also in Georgetown Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics No. 22, 1-43. Washington, D. C., Georgetown University Press, 1970.

_____. 1969c. "Some Sources of Reading Problems for Negro Speakers of Nonstandard English." In Teaching Black Children to Read, ed. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy, 29-67. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

_____. 1969d. A Study of Nonstandard English. Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English. Also available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 024 053.

Labov, William, and Paul Cohen. 1967. "Systematic Relations of Standard and Non-Standard Rules in the Grammars of Negro Speakers." Project Literacy Reports No. 8, 66-84. Ithaca, N. Y. Also available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 016 946.

Labov, William, Paul Cohen, Clarence Robins, and John Lewis. 1968. A Study of the Non-Standard English of Negro and Puerto Rican Speakers in New York City. Vol. 1: Phonological and Grammatical Analysis; Vol. 2: The Use of Language in the Speech Community. Washington, D. C., Educational Resources Information Center: ED 028 423 and ED 028 424.

Loflin, Marvin D. 1967a. "A Note on the Deep Structure of Nonstandard English in Washington, D. C." Glossa 1:1.26-32. Also available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 010 875.

_____. 1967b. "On the Structure of the Verb in a Dialect of American Negro English." Technical Report No. 26 of the Group Psychology Branch of the Office of Naval Research. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics, mimeographed.

_____. 1969. "Negro Nonstandard and Standard English: Same or Different Deep Structure?" Orbis 18:1.74-91.

Long, Richard A. 1969. "The Uncle Remus Dialect: A Preliminary Linguistic View." Washington, D. C., Educational Resources Information Center: ED 028 416.

McDavid, Raven I., Jr. 1967a. "A Checklist of Significant Features for Discriminating Social Dialects." In Dimensions of Dialect, ed. Eldonna L. Evertts, 7-10. Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English.

_____. 1967b. "Historical, Regional, and Social Variation." Journal of English Linguistics, 1:25-40.

_____. 1967c. "Needed Research in Southern Dialects." In Perspectives on the South: Agenda for Research, ed. Edgar T. Thompson, 113-25. Durham, N. C., Duke University Press.

McDavid, Raven I., Jr., and Virginia Glenn McDavid. 1951. "The Relationship of the Speech of American Negroes to the Speech of Whites." American Speech 36:1.3-17.

Miller, Warren. 1959. The Cool World. Greenwich, Conn., Fawcett.

Moore, Mary Jo., comp. 1969. "A Preliminary Bibliography of American English Dialects." Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics. Available from Educational Resources Information Center: ED 033 327.

Moritz, Charles, ed. 1967-68. "Brown, Claude." Current Biography 1967. New York, H. W. Wilson Company.

Pedersen, Lee A. 1964a. "Non-standard Negro Speech in Chicago." In Non-standard Speech and the Teaching of English, ed. William A. Stewart, 16-23. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

_____. 1964b. "Some Structural Differences in the Speech of Chicago Negroes." In Social Dialects and Language Learning, ed. Roger W. Shuy, 28-51. Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English.

_____. 1965. "The Pronunciation of English in Metropolitan Chicago." Publication of the American Dialect Society No. 44, 1-87.

_____. 1965-66. "Negro Speech in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn." Mark Twain Journal 13:1.1-4.

Pickford, Glenna Ruth. 1956. "American Linguistic Geography: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal." Word 12:2.211-33.

Read, Allen Walker. 1939. "The Speech of Negroes in Colonial America." Journal of Negro History 24:3.247-58.

Shuy, Roger W. 1967. Discovering American Dialects. Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English.

_____. 1969. "Sex as a Factor in Sociolinguistic Research." Presented at the meeting of the Anthropological Society of Washington, Washington, D. C., Feb. 18, 1969. Available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 027 522.

_____. 1970. "Subjective Judgments in Sociolinguistic Analysis." In Report of the Twentieth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, ed. James E. Alatis, 175-88. Georgetown Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics No. 22. Washington, D. C., Georgetown University Press.

Shuy, Roger W., Walter A. Wolfram, and William K. Riley. 1967. "Linguistic Correlates of Social Stratification in Detroit Speech." Final Report, Cooperative Research Project 6-1397, U. S. Office of Education. Available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 022 187.

Stevens, Shane. 1966. Go Down Dead. New York, William Morrow and Company.

Stewart, William A. 1964. "Foreign Language Teaching Methods in Quasi-Foreign Language Situations." In Non-standard Speech and the Teaching of English, ed. William A. Stewart, 1-15. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

_____. 1965. "Urban Negro Speech: Sociolinguistic Factors Affecting English Teaching." In Social Dialects and Language Learning, ed. Roger W. Shuy, 10-18. Champaign, Ill., National Council of Teachers of English.

_____. 1966-67. "Nonstandard Speech Patterns." Baltimore Bulletin of Education 43:2-4.52-65.

_____. 1967. "Sociolinguistic Factors in the History of American Negro Dialects." The Florida FL Reporter 5:2. Reissued by the National Council of Teachers of English, 1968. Also available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 012 435.

_____. 1968. "Continuity and Change in American Negro Dialects." The Florida FL Reporter 6:1.3-4, 14-16, 18.

_____. 1969. "On the Use of Negro Dialect in the Teaching of Reading." In Teaching Black Children to Read, ed. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy, 156-218. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

_____. 1970. "Historical and Structural Bases for the Recognition of Negro Dialect." In Report of the Twentieth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, ed. James E. Alatis, 239-247. Georgetown Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics No. 22. Washington, D. C., Georgetown University Press.

Tarone, Elaine. 1970. A Selected Annotated Bibliography on Social Dialects, for Teachers of Speech and English. Speech Science Laboratories Reference Series C404. University of Washington.

Walker, Ursula Genung. 1968. "Structural Features of Negro English in Natchitoches Parish." Master's thesis, Northwestern State College, Natchitoches, Louisiana. Available from the Educational Resources Information Center: ED 022 184.

Wolfram, Walter A. 1968. "Social Stigmatizing and the Linguistic Variable in a Negro Speech Community." Paper presented at meeting of the Speech Association of America, Chicago, Ill,, December 1968.

_____. 1969a. "Black/White Speech Differences Revisited: A Preliminary Report." Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics. Available from Educational Resources Information Center: ED 033 356.

_____. 1969b. "Social Dialects from a Linguistic Perspective: Assumptions, Current Research, and Future Directions." Presented at Center for Applied Linguistics conference on Approaches to Social Dialects, Washington, D. C., Oct. 31 to Nov. 1, 1969. Available from Educational Resources Information Center: ED 032 535.

_____. 1969c. A Sociolinguistic Description of Detroit Negro Speech. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.

_____. 1970. "Linguistic Correlates of Social Differences in the Negro Community." In Report of the Twentieth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Studies, ed. James E. Alatis, 249-57. Georgetown Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics No. 22. Washington, D. C., Georgetown University Press.

Wolfram, Walter A., and Ralph W. Fasold. 1969. "Toward Reading Materials for Speakers of Black English: Three Linguistically Appropriate Passages." In Teaching Black Children to Read, ed. Joan C. Baratz and Roger W. Shuy, 138-55. Washington, D. C., Center for Applied Linguistics.